TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DISTRESS FUND.

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# Report of a Visit to the Camps of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies.

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By EMILY HOBHOUSE.

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*PRICE ONE PENNY.*

# To the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children.

## I.—REPORT AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

As I have been acting as your delegate in South Africa I am anxious to submit to you without delay some account of the Camps in which the women and children are concentrated, and to put before you the need for further effort on their behalf. By the kind permission of Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener I have been enabled to visit a certain number of these Camps, investigate the needs of the people and arrange for the partial administration of the Fund with which you entrusted me.

Considering the changing condition of the Camps, it is hardly possible to draw up an ordinary conventional report. It would seem better to place before you what was written down day by day, as it was seen and as it happened. Here and there foot-notes point out alterations or improvements of later date. By this means some faint picture may be presented to your minds of what is being undergone by the weaker members of two whole countries. Some suggestions are appended which, if adopted, would go far, in my opinion, to alleviate the conditions of life in the Camps during the months or years they may be maintained.—I have, etc., E. HOBHOUSE.

January 22nd.

"I had a splendid truck given me at Capetown, through the kind co-operation of Sir Alfred Milner—a large double-covered one, capable of holding 12 tons. I took £200 worth of groceries, besides all the bales of clothing I could muster. The truck left Capetown the day before myself, was hitched on to my train at De Aar, and so arrived when I did. The first thing next day was to go down to the goods station, claim the truck, and arrange for its unloading. This morning I have spent arranging all my stores—unpacking and sorting them. It is very hot. I think the essence of delightful work is when you quite forget you have a body, but here the heat keeps you in constant recollection that you are still in the flesh, and it's a great hindrance. I did not have a bad journey from Capetown, though it was rather a lonely one. Going through the Karoo it was very hot, and the second day there were horrible dust-storms, varied by thunderstorms. The sand penetrated through closed windows and doors, filled eyes and ears, turned my hair red and covered everything like a tablecloth. As far as extent and sweep of land and sky go the Karoo is delightful, but it's a vast solitude, and in many parts the very plants grow two or three yards apart, as if they shunned society. From Colesberg on it was a desolate outlook. The land seemed dead and silent as far as eye could reach, absolutely without life, only carcases of horses, mules, and cattle, with a sort of acute anguish in their look, and bleached bones and refuse of many kinds. I saw a few burnt farms, but those unburnt seemed still and lifeless also, and no work is going on in the fields. Really, the line the whole way up is a string of Tommies, yawning at their posts, and these always crowded to the carriage windows to beg for newspapers, or anything, they said, to pass the time. I gave them all I had, and all my novels.

. . But I must pass on to tell you about the Women's Camp, which, after all, is the central point of interest."

### THE BLOEMFONTEIN CAMP.

January 26th.

The exile camp here is a good two miles from the town, dumped down on the southern slope of a kopje, right out on to the bare brown veldt, not a vestige of a tree in any direction, nor shade of any description. It was about four o'clock of a scorching afternoon when I set foot in the camp, and I can't tell you what I felt like, so I won't try.

I began by finding a woman whose sister I

had met in Capetown. It is such a puzzle to find your way in a village of bell tents, no streets or names or numbers. There are nearly 2,000 people in this one camp, of which some few are men—they call them "hands up" men —and over 900 children.

Imagine the heat outside the tents, and the suffocation inside! We sat on their khaki blankets, rolled up, inside Mrs. B.'s tent; and the sun blazed through the single canvas, and the flies lay thick and black on everything; no chair, no table, nor any room for such; only a deal box, standing on its end, served as a wee pantry. In this tiny tent live Mrs. B.'s five children (three quite grown up) and a little Kaffir servant girl. Many tents have more occupants. Mrs. P. came in, and Mrs. R. and others, and they told me their stories, and we cried together, and even laughed together, and chatted bad Dutch and bad English all the afternoon. On wet nights the water streams down through the canvas and comes flowing in, as it knows how to do in this country, under the flap of the tent, and wets their blanket as they lie on the ground. While we sat there a snake came in. They said it was a puff adder, very poisonous, so they all ran out, and I attacked the creature with my parasol. I could not bear to think the thing should be at large in a community mostly sleeping on the ground. After a struggle I wounded it, and then a man came with a mallet and finished it off.

Mrs. P. is very brave and calm. She has six children, ranging from fifteen down to two years, and she does not know where any one of them is.* She was taken right away from them; her husband is in detention of some kind at Bloemfontein, but not allowed to see her. She expects her confinement in about three weeks, and yet has to lie on the bare ground till she is stiff and sore, and she has had nothing to sit on for over two months, but must squat on a rolled-up blanket. I felt quite sure you would like her to have a mattress, and I asked her if she would accept one. She did so very gratefully, and I did not rest yesterday till I got one out to her. All her baby linen was in readiness at home, but all is lost. This is but one case, quite ordinary, among hundreds and hundreds. The women are wonderful. They cry very little and never complain. The very magnitude of their sufferings, indignities, loss and anxiety seems to lift them beyond tears. These people, who have had comfortable, even luxurious homes, just set themselves to quiet endurance and to make the best of their bare and terrible lot; only when it cuts afresh at them through their children do their feelings flash out. Mrs. M., for instance. She has six children in camp, all ill, two in the tin hospital with typhoid, and four sick in the tent. She also expects her confinement soon. Her husband is in Ceylon. She has means, and would gladly provide for herself either in town or in the Colony, where she has relations, or by going back to her farm. It was not burnt, only the furniture was destroyed; yet here she has to stay, watching her children droop and sicken. For their sakes she did plead with tears that she might go and fend for herself.

I call this camp system a wholesale cruelty. It can never be wiped out of the memories of the people. It presses hardest on the children. They droop in the terrible heat, and with the insufficient, unsuitable food; whatever you do, whatever the authorities do, and they are, I believe, doing their best with very limited means, it is all only a miserable patch upon a great ill. Thousands, physically unfit, are placed in conditions of life which they have not strength to endure. In front of them is blank ruin. There are cases, too, in which whole families are severed and scattered, they don't know where.

Will you try, somehow, to make the British public understand the position, and force it to ask itself what is going to be done with these people? There must be full 15,000* of them; I should not wonder if there are not more. Some few have means, but more are ruined, and have not a present penny. In one of two ways must the British public support them, either by taxation through the authorities, or else by voluntary charity.

If the people at home want to save their purses (you see, I appeal to low motives), why not allow those who can maintain themselves to go to friends and relatives in the Colony? Many wish ardently to do so. That would be some relief. If only the English people would try to exercise a little imagination—picture the whole miserable scene. Entire villages and districts rooted up and dumped in a strange, bare place.

To keep these Camps going is murder to the children. Still, of course, by more judicious management they could be improved; but, do what you will, you can't undo the thing itself.

To-day is Sunday, and all the day I have been toiling and moiling over the bales of clothes—unpacking, sorting, and putting up in bundles. We were so glad of such odd things, such as stays and little boys' braces! I found some baby linen for Mrs. P. I do not think that there is a single superfluous article. But what a family to clothe!

Now I must tell you their rations:—

Daily—

Meat, ½lb (with bone and fat).
Coffee, 2oz.
Wholemeal, ¾lb.
Condensed milk, one-twelfth of tin.
Sugar, 2oz.
Salt, ½oz.

That is all, nothing else to fill in. Once they sometimes had potatoes, seven potatoes for seven people, but that has long been impossible. Soap also has been unattainable, and none given

*These numbers are now nearly doubled.
* Three months later—Mrs. P. has been rejoined to all her children, except two.

* Of course the numbers are now largely increased. over 20,000 in Orange River Colony alone; 25,000 in Transvaal camps, besides the Colony and Natal.

in the rations.* Some people have money, and may add to the above by purchasing certain things at some little retail shops allowed in the Camp, which charge exorbitant prices,† for instance, 6d. for a reel of cotton. But they are, naturally, terribly afraid of parting with their money, feeling it is all they will have to begin life on again, for every one's income is stopped, nothing is coming in. It is, indeed, a dreary prospect. Some few of those who had cash in hand buried it out on their farms for safety, and now, of course, cannot reach it. All say, if released, they would make a living somehow, and shelter beneath the ruined home would be as good as these often rotten tents. It is hard enough that, but countless children's lives would be saved thereby.

We have much typhoid, and are dreading an outbreak, so I am directing my energies to getting the water of the Modder River boiled. As well swallow typhoid germs whole as drink that water — so say doctors. Yet they cannot boil it all, for—first, fuel is very scarce; that which is supplied weekly would not cook a meal a day, and they have to search the already bare kopjes for a supply. There is hardly a bit to be had. Second, they have no extra utensil to hold the water when boiled. I propose, therefore, to give each tent another pail or crock, and get a proclamation issued that all drinking water must be boiled. It will cost nearly £50 to do this, even if utensils are procurable.

In spite of small water supply, and it is very spare, all the tents I have been in are exquisitely neat and clean, except two, and they were ordinary, and such limitations!

January 31st.

I suggested a big railway boiler* to boil every drop of water before it is served out. This would economise fuel, and be cheaper in the long run, besides ensuring the end desired, for many could not be trusted to boil their own. Next we want forage for the cows. Fifty have been secured, but they only get four buckets of milk out of the poor starved things.† What is needed is a wash-house with water laid on from the town, but I see no chance of it. Some people in town still assert that the Camp is a haven of bliss. Well, there are eyes and no eyes. I was at the camp to-day, and just in one little corner this is the sort of thing I found. The nurse, underfed and overworked, just sinking on to her bed, hardly able to hold herself up, after coping with some thirty typhoid and other patients, with only the untrained help of two Boer girls—cooking as well as nursing to do herself.

Next, I was called to see a woman panting in the heat, just sickening for her confinement. Fortunately, I had a night-dress in my bundle to give her, and two tiny baby gowns.

Next tent, a six months' baby gasping its life out on its mother's knee. The doctor had given it powders in the morning, but it had taken nothing since. Two or three others drooping and sick in that tent.

Next, child recovering from measles, sent back from hospital before it could walk, stretched on the ground, white and wan; three or four others lying about.

Next, a girl of twenty-one lay dying on a stretcher. The father, a big, gentle Boer, kneeling beside her; while, next tent, his wife was watching a child of six, also dying, and one of about five drooping. Already this couple had lost three children in the hospital. and so would not let these go, though I begged hard to take them out of the hot tent. "We must watch these ourselves," he said. I sent —— to find brandy, and got some down the girl's throat, but for the most part you must stand and look on, helpless to do anything, because there is nothing to do anything with.

Then a man came up and said: "Sister" (they call be "Sister," or "Di Meisie van England"), "come and see my child, sick for nearly three months." It was a dear little chap of four, and nothing left of him but his great brown eyes and white teeth, from which the lips were drawn back, too thin to close. His body was emaciated. The little fellow had craved for fresh milk; but, of course, there had been none till these last two days, and now the fifty cows only give four buckets, so you can imagine what feed there is for them. I sent —— for some of this, and made him lay the child outside on a pillow to get the breeze that comes up at sunset. I can't describe what it is to see these children lying about in a state of collapse. It's just exactly like faded flowers thrown away. And one has to stand and look on at such misery, and be able to do almost nothing.

## NORVALS PONT AND ALIWAL NORTH.

February 10th.

I should like now to begin an account of Norvals Pont Camp. It has been an exciting week, because I had pitched on the same days as De Wet had done for careering up and down this line. At the best of times travelling is hard enough in this hot, slow, thirsty land; but add to heat military control of everything, absence, or partial disappearance, of ordinary officials; permits and passes of endless kinds, the danger of travelling at night, the line occasionally torn up or a train burnt, and the route blocked by countless strings of troop trains and supply trains, all having to pass each other at sidings, as the line is single, and you have some idea of the patience required. One very hot day our eyes were refreshed by continued mirages, pre-

* With much persuasion, and weeks after requisitioning, soap is now given in occasionally in very minute quantities—certainly not enough for clothes and personal washing.

† In some camps steps are now taken to prevent exorbitant charges in these shops in certain articles.

* None could be had, so the Government built furnaces and tanks. When the camp doubled this would not supply sufficient, so I left money to put up another.

† Forage was refused, being too precious. After the rains the milk supply was better.

senting delicious views of cool stretches of water and imaginary cliffs. Sometimes I have slept in the train at sidings, sometimes at ghastly so-called hotels. A German Lutheran missionary has shown me much hospitality, and guards have been most kind in admitting me to their vans. I had great fears as to what I might find in the Camp at Norvals Pont, knowing there was no town to draw upon for supplies or help of any kind. But I am glad to be able to report that it is far superior to the Camp at Bloemfontein. The spot chosen is a slope, surrounded by hills, about a mile from the station. From the Commandant's tent there is a pretty stretch of the Orange River visible, and, far off, the blue, square-topped hill which marks Bethulie. The general character of the hills is like this—square and flat-topped—table mountains constantly recurring all through the land.

The population of this Camp is about 1,500, and it is well laid out in rows and streets with numbers, so that you can find your way about. There are only a few marquees, and those are put in a row on one side to accommodate some of the true refugees. As these people are quite in a minority, it is wholly absurd to call the Camps by their name, "Refugee"; and even they can hardly be said to have come quite of their own free will, only they were told their particular town was to be emptied out, and they would starve if they did not come. The people who were in reality taken as prisoners of war occupy the centre and great bulk of the Camp, and beyond a broad space on the other side are pitched the tents of the single men, people who have surrendered, or such like.

Betwen the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. this part of the camp is prohibited from passing to the other side, and the soldiery have no tents in the precincts of the camp..

Instead of drinking the waters of the Orange, they use that river only for bathing, and the Commandant had pipes laid on from a farm, where a spring gives 14,000 gallons per hour, and this pure water is brought into camp.

Much to my delight, I found that there was much less overcrowding in Norval's Pont, and that each tent was supplied with a low wooden bed, a mattress, bench, table, utensils. Consequently, the whole aspect of the people was different. There was no violent outbreak of sickness, though I understand that almost all the cases nursed in the hospital had died. This I attribute (and so did the people) to bad nursing. They have no trained nurse. I hope one may soon be procured.* There is no minister, and they bury their own dead.†

The heat was very great. Even the large, cool, breezy marquee was often 104 deg. Fahrenheit. and the bell tents, with single canvas, rise to 108 to 110 deg. The doctor said he could not use his clinical thermometer in them, as it would not go down at all. I get greatly exhausted after sitting in these tents talking to the people a whole day, especially as there are six or seven in the tent, and others from outside come and throng round the narrow opening, excluding any possible breath of air.

Sir Alfred Milner is sending round the Education Commissioner to arrange about schools in each of these camps. In Norval's Pont‡ two large marquees are set apart, and mistresses duly certificated are available from the camp population.

Now the need of clothing for the children is very great. The Commandant had been so unhappy about the clothelessness that he had ordered £150 worth and given it out. I undertook to forward some, and chose some women in the camp to store and distribute it where most needed.

The death rate, though very high, is not so high as in Bloemfontein. Less overcrowding and better water.

## ALIWAL NORTH.

February 12.

It was an awful journey from Norval's Pont to Aliwal North, but still I did get there at last. Poor little Aliwal, with only 800 inhabitants, had, within four weeks, to receive and provide for a population of nearly 2,000, nearly three times its own number. And it does them credit, for it is well organized, and, as far as that goes, the misery is alleviated. The Commandant could not speak highly enough of the people—their patience, good conduct, and uncomplainingness under their privations and losses. His camp can barely be called a prison; he has no soldiers or sentries, and most of the people are free to walk into the town, or to receive visits from the people in the town, without passes. The towns of Smithfield, Rouxville, and Zastron are all here, and, so far, only two deaths have taken place. But the camp has only been forming a month. Everything is beautifully arranged and provided for. He gives two tents to large families, and offers sail cloth to any who care to put up wooden framework to make extra rooms. He encourages them to come and state their needs. The rations here are better. Compressed vegetables were given, and 1lb. of potatoes twice a week, (and potatoes are 6d. per lb., or eight times as dear as in London).

I found there a young woman, a complete cripple from hips downwards, and, therefore, quite unfit for tent life, but anxious to earn her own living, as she could do so, by sewing, in a town. The Commandant was perfectly willing she should go if she knew where and

*One of the Netherlands' nurses is there now, besides an experienced woman from Capetown in charge of the Scarlatina Hospital.

†Mr. Van der Merwe, from Beaufort West, has, since the second week in April, been allowed to reside.

‡Under Mr. E. B. Sargant, Education Commissioner, schools for children between certain ages are now being organized, and in some camps are already doing good work. Accommodation cannot be obtained for all as yet.

how, and I am trying to get this arranged in Aliwal North. Clothing for children is much needed, especially now the school is likely to open, and I chose some women to receive and distribute the goods. The great lack has been soap. Neither in this camp, nor in Norval's Pont, has any been supplied, and those without money have been unable to wash clothes or person properly. Men don't think of these things unless it is suggested to them; they simply say, "How dirty these people are!"

I bought some soap in the town, and sent it in for immediate needs; also material for the women to make up themselves. Many have brought their sewing machines when they saved nothing else.

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## BACK IN BLOEMFONTEIN.

February 17.—I want very much to take the best class of young girls out of camp and place them in boarding schools. The mothers cannot bear to see their girls, month after month, idle in these camps. The life seems to be very demoralizing owing to its purposelessness, and this camp in particular is quite bad for young girls. We all feel that. I can rig them out with clothes from my store.

Now I am beginning to find out the best ways of spending the money.

First, the one I have just proposed, because to get away from the Camp is best.

Next, providing (if procurable) materials for both men and women to work at for their own use, for sale, and also for occupation. A man said if he only had some leather he could keep his family in shoes, and cobble for others for a few pence. To-morrow I shall try and purchase the materials, but you must recollect everything here is scarce, and I may have to go to Capetown. To-day I found a man making jolly little baskets most cleverly, just out of bushes from the kopje. The Dutch are so very full of resource, and so clever. Then, too, they can make their own soap with fat and soda, and, though the Government permit has at last come to supply soap in the rations, yet it might be cheaper to supply the materials and employ a few women to make the necessary supply for the Camp.

At last, too, the tanks have come, and now we shall be able to begin boiling all the water before giving it out, and I hope this may lessen the fever. The throat complaints are, the Doctor says, owing entirely to the bad smells resulting from the bad sanitary arrangements. One side of the Camp the odour is unbearable.

I have been interested in a little baby, born this week in a wee tent so poverty-stricken. The mother asked me to name it with a name suitable to the times. I suggested "Dolores," or, what I thought would be better still, "Hope." But the sad, sick mother can see no hope, and chose "Dolores" for her little child. As she could not do her washing, we got another woman to do it for her, and the father cobbled that woman's shoes by way of payment. In Irene Camp I hear there have been 200 cases of midwifery alone, so the baby outfits come handy everywhere.

I am very worried about the lack of mattresses, but if the military will give me hay or straw I will set the people to work to make them themselves. No other kind of stuffing in any quantity seems obtainable, and so, failing this, the majority must lie upon the hard ground, as they do now.

I feel very chirpy to-day, for I have got leave that one very nice woman, with three little children, shall be allowed to go south to her friends in the Colony.* Many could be drafted off that way, and so relieve the pressure.

I just want to send a line to assure you that the clothing is excellent, and much appreciated. I want to send home all the blessing and thanks and hand-kisses I receive, feeling these rightly belong to those who stitch.

Long pinafores are much worn by girls and women of all ages up to about 40, and kappies, which I should describe as a kind of glorified sunbonnet. It makes the women look like magnified children, but is rather picturesque.

February 18.—We want a larger supply of tents, so that there may be less overcrowding. At present it averages six to a small bell-tent, which, of course, means nine and ten in many cases. The capacity is under 500 cubic feet; so even for six persons, imagine the atmosphere at night!

It is such a curious position, hollow and rotten to the heart's core, to have made all over the State large, uncomfortable communities of people whom you call refugees, and say you are protecting, but who call themselves prisoners of war, compulsorily detained, and detesting your protection.

Those who are suffering most keenly, and who have lost most, either of their children by death or their possessions by fire and sword, such as these reconcentrated women in the camps, have the most conspicuous patience, and never express a wish that their men should be the ones to give way. It must be fought out now, they think, to the bitter end.

Feb. 22.—In the morning word came that the four girls I selected had been let out of camp, and allowed to come to the Boarding School, and I had to go and see they were clothed and shod.* Poor girls, they said it had been such a treat to sleep in a bed once more after seven months in the Camp on the ground. One of them,

* A disappointment was in store about this. When the written application was sent in, six weeks passed, and then the request was refused by the military. Her husband was never on commando, but went with the Red Cross. For 14 months she has neither seen nor heard of him, and does not know if he is alive or dead. Her old father in Cape Colony is 80, and she wants so much to see him once more. Besides this, her health is gradually breaking down in the Camp, and one of her children has died.

* Have rigged them out with those nice dark blue skirts and the print blouses.

who had a slight tendency to deafness, has now become, I fear, permanently deaf in both ears; she caught such chills from the draughts and damp coming under the tent. Consequences such as this, which don't appear in the death-rate or anywhere else, will be very common results of this whole camp system.

I do wish someone would come out and take up the question of the Native Camps. From odd bits I hear it would seem to be much needed.

An old man was arrested in the Camp yesterday. It appears that a gossipping woman refugee went to the Commandant and stated that she had heard the old man say: "Perhaps the Boers will be in Bloemfontein again, some day." So he was arrested and sent in to prison.

Feb. 27.—I am beginning to think a good deal about the future and my best plan of procedure. The demand for clothing is so huge that it is hopeless to think that the private charity of England and Colonial working parties combined can effectually cope with more than a very small portion of it. The Government recognise that they must provide necessary clothes, and I think we all agree that, having brought these people into this position, it is their duty to do so. It is, of course, a question for the English folk to decide how long they like to go on making and sending clothes. There is no doubt they are immensely appreciated, besides, they are mostly made up, which the Government clothing won't be.

So far five camps are, and have been, open to me; but several more remain in this State, and very large and important ones in the Transvaal. I may, by luck, get to Kroonstadt, etc., but Lord Kitchener has twice distinctly refused me permission to go further north.

Any amount of money could, of course, be spent in making the people more comfortable, especially now that they are getting to the end of such small sums as they had with them, and much might be spent in getting girls and boys away to the good schools; but the largest sums will be needed as and when they are allowed to leave and go back to begin life again.

If I knew how much money was likely to come altogether I should know how to lay it out to the best advantage.

The four girls selected for the Institute are aged 13-18 years. The day after her arrival one of them developed typhoid, and we must send her to the Volks Hospital, and select another girl in her place. Mrs. ——, mother of two of the above girls, is my great help and stand-by in the Camp. She belongs to an old Cape family; her husband was a landdrost, and she, of course, lost everything. But she has set a splendid example in the Camp of what you may call common-sense, and, besides, allows us to make her tent a regular depot for bundles of clothing, comforts, etceteras of all kinds, and does hours of untiring interpreting for me personally. I have failed to get as matron the woman I wanted, and so I have definitely asked Mrs. —— to go round the tents and look after the sick and emaciated babies and the women who are ill, but unable to go to hospital, either because that is full or because of so many small children they cannot leave. So many of the more ignorant prisoners are puzzled by the doctor and superintendents, and all need a link through a kind, sensible woman like Mrs. ——. She is also doing a great deal of voluntary work, such as undertaking 200 families for the Clothing Committee (no sinecure), and cooking for and tending a dear old prisoner, who is in consumption, and came up from Greenpoint because the sea-air was killing him.

You know we have three tin hospitals, each containing 16 beds, always full—for men, women, and children—also two or three marquees for other cases.

The Sister has done splendid work in her domain, battling against incessant difficulties. She has worked in this Camp since its formation. When I tell you we have already had some 70 cases of typhoid, besides an epidemic of measles, pneumonia, tonsilitis, and other cases, you will realise what the strain on her has been. In addition, she has had the worry of nothing ready to her hand, and the very hospital only building by degrees through it all; and, to crown the work, she has had the task of training Boer girls to nurse under her.

They have put up five rows of corrugated iron rooms (I can't call them houses), two rows of single rooms back to back—ten in a row, twenty in a building—and each of these rooms contains one family or more. About a hundred families are thus accommodated. The iron partitions don't run to the roof, so noise, draught, and infection can play through the entire structure. Some prefer them, because they have floors. £2,500 has been expended on the erection of these bare miserable rooms, apart from all the other expenses of the Camp. So you see it is a very costly business upon which England has embarked, and even at such a cost hardly the barest necessaries can be provided, and no comforts. It is so strange to think that every tent contains a family, and every family is in trouble—loss behind, poverty in front, sickness, privation, and death in the present. But they are very good, and say they have agreed to be cheerful and make the best of it all.

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## SPRINGFONTEIN.

March 4.

I am in this queer little spot, the highest place, they say, in the Free State; and I am being lodged by a most hospitable German Lutheran missionary. They give me a room and the best of everything that they have, and I enjoy seeing how they live, and they are charming in their simple way, and truly generous. I brought them down a big box of groceries from B————. Everything is so scarce, many necessaries unobtainable. I was very sorry to leave Mrs. F———'s house. She has been so very kind and good to me, but I have left a small Committee to work in the

Camp and watch the interest of the people there, and I am anxious to visit Kimberley and others. My difficulty is that, in spite of my permit, I am not allowed to travel below Norval's Pont, and one has to go down to De Aar and up again to reach Kimberley.

I have several days' work here. It is a comparatively small and recent Camp, but the people are poorer and more utterly destitute than any I have yet seen.

The Commandant is a kind man, and willing to help both the people and me as far as possible, but his limitations (and mine), through lack of material, are woeful. Fortunately, I brought three cases of clothing with me; but it is a drop in the ocean of their needs. All day I have sat in a farmhouse stoep, and had each family in succession brought to me from the tents, fitting each in turn with clothes as far as possible, just to cover their nakedness. Each woman tells me her story, a story which, from its similarity to all which have gone before, grows monotonous. But it is always interesting to note the various ways in which the great common trouble is met by divers characters. Some are scared, some paralyzed and unable to realise their loss, some are dissolved in tears; some, mute and dry-eyed, seem only able to think of the blank, penniless future; and some are glowing with pride at being prisoners for their country's sake.

A few bare women had made petticoats out of the brown rough blankets—one had on a man's trousers. Nearly all the children have nothing left but a worn print frock, with nothing beneath it, and shoes and socks long since worn away. Shoes we must leave—it is hopeless—until we can procure rolls of sole leather and uppers, lasts and sprigs, and then the men can make veld schoone, a simple kind of rough shoe.

I clothed about fifteen families to-day, or about sixty persons, and hope to do the same to-morrow, and I may collect some old clothes from the residents here to help us along.

In despair I went to the one village shop, but it is long since cleared out, and I came away empty, save for some packets of needles. I had been giving some material for women to make their own boys' clothing, but we are stopped by the utter famine of cotton or thread. Scissors are handed round from tent to tent; thimbles are very few. Everything here is so scarce that the sight of my rough deal packing cases created quite a sensation—not for what was inside, but for the actual wood. They are destined to make low bedsteads, tables, and a few bits for firing.

Mattresses, I fear, are out of the question here on account of the lack of material, but we thought low beds might be made if a little wood could be found and strips of sacking nailed across. This would lift them off the ground for the winter. Perhaps we shall manage a few. The crying need in this Camp is fuel. Wood there is none; a little coal is served out, but so little that many days the people cannot cook at all, and their rations are raw meat, meal, and coffee, so each of these needs fire. if you could peep at Springfontein you would at once realize the hopelessness of getting any fuel—a bare veldt, covered with short sparse vegetation, ringed by barest kopjes, stony, and without even grass. Except at the farm where I sat there are no trees, and these have been grown with greatest pains. So there is nothing to burn.

Women to whom I have given nothing nor offered to, and who neither ask nor wish for charity, express deepest gratitude for the bare tidings that any English people feel for them. They are very sore at heart, and are really helped by the knowledge that we understand at all the aspect of affairs as it appears to them. They are tired of being told by officers that they are refugees under the "kind and beneficent protection of the British." In most cases there is no pretence that there was treachery, or ammunition concealed, or food given, or anything. It was just that an order was given to empty the country.

One woman told me to-day that a waggon load of her goods was brought away by soldiers, and followed their convoy. She begged hard for a favourite chair of hers, but was refused.

One afternoon a poor young Tommy came to the door of this house to buy eggs. He was from Somersetshire, near Taunton, and "zo Zummerzet" in his talk that I had to go out and interpret. Poor boy, he was very sorry for himself and longing for home. Never, never, never would he go to war again; he had had a "sickener." He was just out from hospital and an attack of slow fever, and was jealous of the C.I.V.'s going home so soon. I gave him my pot of cocoa, which he said would be a great treat. He had had to sleep in six inches of water, and all his rations were swamped and those of his companions.

I just want to say, while it's in my mind, that the blouses sent from England, and supposed to be full grown, are only useful here for girls of 12 to 14 or so—much too small for the well-developed Boer maiden, who is really a fine creature. Could an out, out woman's size be procured? and for camp-life dark colours are best. It's hard to keep clean, and soap is a luxury, water not superabundant. You would have realized the scarcity and poverty a little had you seen me doling out pins and needles by twos and threes, and dividing reels of cotton and bits of rag for patching. A few combs I brought up from Capetown were caught at with joy.

There is very little time here for letter writing, as I am busy in Camp all day, and then we all have to be in bed and lights out by 8.30 p.m. It's rather nice living with the sun in this sort of way.

With regard to the vexed question of differing nationalities, is it generally known and realized at home that there are many large native (coloured) Camps dotted about? In my opinion these need looking into badly. I under-

stand the death-rate in the one at Bloemfontein to be very high, and so also in other places, but I cannot possibly pay any attention to them myself. Why shouldn't the Society of Friends send someone if the war goes on, or the Aborigines Protection Society?

Though the camps are called refugee, there are in reality a very few of these—perhaps only half-a-dozen in some camps. It is easy to tell them, because they are put in the best marquees, and have had time given them to bring furniture and clothes, and are mostly self-satisfied and vastly superior people. Very few, if any of them, are in want.

## RAILWAY STAFF OFFICE, NORVALS PONT.

March 10.

I have already sat here seven hours waiting for the train, and it appears likely I may spend the night in this office. I had no difficulty in getting my ticket for Kimberley, but was expressly told it must be at my own risk.

I wish you could impress on the English public that one can't speak generally about these Camps, or the conditions of the women therein. One is very different from another. I mention this because there is likely to be any amount of assertion and contradiction on this subject. All are different, and the amount of discomfort depends upon various matters. (First) The Commandant. (Secondly) Natural conditions, proximity of wood and water. (Thirdly) Distance from a base and stores. (Fourthly) Presence of public opinion. (Fifthly) Date of commencement.

The earlier camps, of course, had opportunities of getting many necessaries, which are no longer attainable.

## KIMBERLEY.

March 12.

It was a melancholy journey to Kimberley. Our line took us through the battlefields, the now historic scenes of the disasters. Belmont, Modder River, Magersfontein, came in succession, and we could see the ridge towards which the Highlanders advanced, and the long, long trench where the Boers lay and shot down the Black Watch. It's all quiet now—the plain and the hills—nothing to mark the spot but the trenches and the groups of graves.

March 13.

All to-day I have been in the camp—fortunately only 20 minutes' walk from my hotel. It is the smallest in area that I have seen. The tents, too close together, and the whole enclosed in an 8-foot high barbed wire fencing, which is supposed to be impregnable, and cost £500. Sentries at the gate and walking inside. No nurse; an empty, unfurnished marquee, which might be a hospital; overcrowded tents; measles and whooping-cough rife; camp dirty and smelling; an army doctor, who naturally knows little of children's ailments; fuel, almost none.

A Commandant's wife is here, with six children. It is so sad about her baby. A general came to her home with his column to sweep her away. She is a delicate-looking, gentle woman, with a white skin and beautiful scarlet lips, so seldom seen out of books. Her baby was only 17 days old when the troops came, and she was very weak. She could not nurse the child, and, like all her children, it was being brought up on donkey's milk. This she explained to the general, who gave special commands that wherever she went that donkey was to go, even to Vryburg and Kimberley. Well, by degrees, she arrived in Kimberley, and the donkey came also to the town. But once she was in the camp that donkey disappeared. They either couldn't or wouldn't produce it. The baby failed and pined. Friends from Kimberley tried everything—cow's milk, condensed milk—all no good. It was a splendid child, and it dwindled to skin and bone. At last the new superintendent arrived; they appealed to him, and showed him the dying baby. At once he produced that donkey; but it was too late. The baby had got so weak it was past recovery. We tried what we could, but to-day it died. It was only 3 months, but such a sweet little thing. The mother is much respected, and there is great sympathy felt for her. It was still alive this morning; when I called in the afternoon they beckoned me in to see the tiny thing laid out, with a white flower in its wee hand. To me it seemed a "murdered innocent." And an hour or two after another child died.

A terrible evil just now is the dew. It is so heavy, and comes right through the single canvas of the tents, wetting everything. The night I slept at Norval's Pont I found this out for myself. Though in a marquee, with double canvas, all my clothes were damp through, and these people have to put their things on saturated day after day. All the morning the gangways are filled with the blankets and odds and ends, regularly turned out to dry in the sun. The doctor told me to-day he highly disapproved of tents for young children, and expected a high mortality before June.

I am going to buy some mourning for this bereaved mother—don't think that foolish or extravagant. You would not if you knew how much these people think of a bit of black, and it seemed to me the best way of showing some sympathy. She is in need of clothes of some sort, and her present from England will be black instead of coloured.

March 15.

To-day I got the mother's black clothes (all hers are burnt), and took them up. Another child had died in the night, and I found all three little corpses being photographed for the absent fathers to see some day. Two little wee white coffins at the gate waiting, and a third wanted. I was glad to see them, for at Springfontein, a young woman had to be buried in a sack, and it hurt their feelings woefully.

March 13.

To-day I bought and presented some clothes, and combs, and soap, and towels to the women who tried to run away. They are, of course, in disgrace, and I felt so sorry for them that we had long talks, and I was sure the best thing was to make them a little happier in camp.

In each case they are mothers, separated from, and desperately anxious about, their children. I told them, in their place, I should also have tried to escape, though I am quite sure I should have failed, and I don't think it would be at all wise, and I counselled them not to try again. I fancy they were a bit softened, and soothed, and won't try to escape any more, but wait and try to get news of their children. It struck me the children may be in ——'s last sweepings, now at Warrenton, and I shall have to go up there.

To-day I have met in committee the plucky little body of women who have tried to meet and succour the distress in the camp and out of it; they work on the same lines as we do, non-sectarian and non-political. Of course they are mainly people of quite small means, for all the wealthy people here are De Beers, in some shape or form. It is wonderful what they have done with their very limited means.

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MAFEKING, April 9.

I arrived here this afternoon, after a long and singularly tedious journey. I felt obliged to come, having learnt there were about 800 women in this camp, besides those at Warrenton, en route. I felt uneasy, for I could learn no details at all about the people here, except that the camp was four miles out of town. At Warrenton there were only about 370 pushed into the church and school, as tents are well nigh unobtainable, but now, only yesterday, many hundreds more have been brought in there—in fact, the town of Hoopstadt. I mean to visit Warrenton on my way back from this if all is well. I do grudge the time spent on the mere journeying—it makes a large hole in my few remaining weeks.

April 10.

To-day I have been out in the camp all day. I had to take a Cape cart and drive out, for it is full six miles—a lonely, lonely spot. Mafeking itself feels like the very end of the world, and the camp seems like driving six miles into space. There are 800 or 900 people, and it is the oldest of all the camps I have visited. In fact, nearly a year old. They were very glad to see me. The hospital nurse said it had put new life and courage into her. She was feeling so downhearted about it all. I found some very nice people whose relations I had made friends with in Bloemfontein camp and also in Kimberley. It is quite interesting sorting out the people and telling them where their relations are. I am at present hunting for the mother of two little boys, aged about six and seven, who were swept away by a different convoy. The Mafeking camp folk were very surprised to hear that English women cared a rap about them or their suffering. It has done them a lot of good to hear that real sympathy is felt for them at home, and so I am glad I fought my way here, if it is only for that reason. The camp was specially interesting to me as being the first I have seen under Transvaal rule. For rations of food and fuel it is far the best I have seen, but, as usual, no soap. The superintendent is a Scotchman, thoroughly capable and suitable, but, alas! likely to be removed ere long. The rations are better than in any other camp accidentally, too long a story to dilate upon in this short letter. They are badly off in blankets (many have none), also soap and candles and clothes, and in having no one to visit or care for them from the outside. For miles round no habitation can be seen, and Mafeking folk are too bitter to do anything to help them.

April 11.

To-day I took out large bundles of stuff as suitable as Mafeking could supply—the choice is not large. I formed a clothing committee of seven women, and in the afternoon we met, and I showed them how to organize their work for the camp. They were very pleased, and are going to meet every Thursday, besides dividing the camp into sections, and making a tent to tent visitation. All the seven women are themselves in need of clothes—they have all had their houses burnt, one by Kaffirs, and the rest by English troops.

One old lady I saw was very interesting, a real character. She was very broken-hearted, more so than any I have met. She harangued me on the subject of her feelings and experiences the best part of an hour in really eloquent Dutch and much solemnity. She described with the extraordinary unselfconsciousness which characterises them all the whole history of the General's visit and actions, and how she had thrown herself flat on the stoep and implored him to trample on her and kill her. And she showed me the clothes she had brought, and there was nothing for herself but a white bundle containing her "dood kleere"—viz., her dead clothes. I fancy she thought that would be all she would need in camp. It was rather a Job-like scene. She sat in her bare, baking tent, a circle of friends round her, an intensely religious woman, trying to understand God's dealings with her and her people in letting everything be taken, and she ended at last with a solemn thanksgiving to "onse Heer" that the English people cared enough even to send someone just to look upon their misery. Altogether the old woman was a striking figure, and very pathetic.

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KIMBERLEY, April 13.

I have just returned. At Warrenton I found only about 150 people left, the rest were being sent on. At the station were two trainloads full of them, quite half in open coal-trucks, all

piled up and wedged in with such goods as they had been able to bring. They were tired and hot. I went and spoke to several of them, and found in a truck the parents of the little boys I mentioned earlier.

There were 240 packed in, and they followed us and our armoured train. On arriving here I saw the Superintendent, who was at hand to meet the arrivals. He told me that after begging, borrowing, and buying he had scraped together 25 tents for the 240 persons. So there will be more overcrowding. I ran up to one of the Committee women to see if anything could be done in the way of getting them a meal after their journey, but nothing had been known of their coming, and late Saturday night we could not tell where to turn to procure either fuel or kettles, etc., to supply such an inrush of people.

April 15.

I am writing just these few lines before leaving this on Friday. I was much distressed to-day in the tent of two women—sisters—whose children are wasting away. We have at last got a new civilian doctor, who speaks Dutch, so I hope we shall move on a bit. Seven children died here the few days I was at Capetown, and two since my return besides.

Mrs. —— has been taken to the hospital in town. She is very ill from a kick in the stomach by a drunken soldier. Something internal. He was punished, I believe, but that does not cure her.

April 15.

All the afternoon I was kept in Mrs. L.'s tent by a downpour of rain. Half the tent floor was a pool of water, which the Kaffir boy was vainly trying to bale out. Two pails caught the pourings from the tent door. All around and above it dripped, making pools on the bedding and on the mats as we sat huddled up—two Kaffirs, five children, Mrs. L., and myself—in the steamy atmosphere, till I began to turn sick, as I generally do in the tents. When it rains at night as often it drips on them all night, and makes little pools on the beds. No wonder children sicken and die. The cloth of the tents seems so very thin and poor.

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BLOEMFONTEIN, April 22.

Here I am again in Bloemfontein. I arrived yesterday, taking 2½ days from Kimberley. The camp work grows so vast and so rapidly that I feel it is almost impossible to cope with it. Here there are now about 4,000, or double the number I left six weeks ago. At Springfontein I left a manageable little camp of 500; now it has swelled to 3,000, and as we passed along yesterday morning there was a trainload in the station of 600 more. It was pitiable to see them—massed in the train, many of them in open trucks. It was bitterly cold, and I was wrapped in a thick grey Welsh shawl. All night there had been a truly torrential downpour of rain, and water stood everywhere in pools. On the saturated ground they were trying to dry themselves and their goods.

Some women were pushing their way to the platform to try and buy food for their children. The soldiers would not permit this. I expostulated. The men said they were sorry for them, but they had to obey orders. It was Sunday morning, and Springfontein's one small shop closed, and I knew the refreshment-room was the only place where food was available. Just then a little friend of mine ran up from the Mission Station with a can of hot coffee for me. I had waved to them from the train as it passed the house. So she and I went down the platform to the cluster of women and gave them the coffee, and I took them all the food I had in the train with me. Fortunately I had just bought a twopenny loaf (for 1s.), and I had some tinned meat.

A nice-looking woman with a very white face spoke to us. They had been travelling two days, and no food given, and the children were crying with hunger. I gave my friend some money and told her to buy all the food she could in the station and take it down to them, and devote the day to it, leaving alone church. The girl promised, and I had just time to jump into my train. I would have stayed myself and seen to it, but my permit was not stamped to break journey, so I could not do so. I know she will do her best. She is only 15, but very womanly. As there was not additional shelter of any kind at Springfontein, I heard the whole lot were to be sent on to Bethulie, for now a Camp is forming there. It is endless and hopeless. I have just heard from a man who met the same trainload at Edenburg that four children died on the journey.

If only the camps had remained the size they were even six weeks ago, I saw some chance of getting them well in hand, organizing and dealing with the distress. But this sudden influx of hundreds and thousands has upset everything, and reduced us all to a state bordering on despair.

More and more are coming in. A new sweeping movement has begun, resulting in hundreds and thousands of these unfortunate people either crowding into already crowded camps or else being dumped down to form a new one where nothing is at hand to shelter them.

About food, too. The superintendent of a camp is getting in rations for such a number, and suddenly 200 more mouths are thrust in upon him, and things won't go round. Last Saturday 200 or 300 families were without meat in Bloemfontein Camp for that day and Sunday. This would not matter if there were an alternative food, but there is only the ordinary supply of coarse bread to fall back upon, with black coffee and sugar.

No wonder sickness abounds. Since I left here six weeks ago there have been 62 deaths in camp, and the doctor himself is down with enteric. Two of the Boer girls who had been trained as nurses, and who were doing good

work, are dead, too. One of them, Poppy Naude, was a universal favourite. She did not know where her mother was. Her father was in Norvals Pont, and there had been some talk of my taking her to join him; but in the end she thought she was doing useful work where she was, earning 2s. a day, and she had better stay and nurse the people in Bloemfontein. I come back to find her dead. The doctor, the nurse, and all had said, "We can't spare Poppy."

But, in spite of the death-roll, I think your fund has saved and strengthened many children. It has provided brandy, maizena, Mellin's, and, where possible, fresh milk. The Government clothing has hitherto come to almost nothing. I formed, as agreed, the committees. The camps were divided into sections, the minimum required was noted down, and the total requisitioned for. Now it has come to a full stop. The superintendent must certify that not one of the applicants has anybody in the camp who could rightly maintain her. Amongst so many, to find that out is well-nigh impossible. The superintendent hesitates, and the whole thing hangs fire.

Thus, had it not been for our clothing, things would have been bad indeed. I hope to get up to Kroonstadt, where no help has been given."

June 1.

These letters end with an expressed hope of going on to Kronstadt, where I had been earnestly invited by the Superintendent, owing to the need of clothes in Camp and amongst the Boer nurses. But permission to do this or to go further north at all was refused. This fact, combined with other reasons, and the belief that a more detailed knowledge of the circumstances was evidently needed in England to facilitate the collection of funds, etc., determined me to return home at once, a few weeks earlier than I should otherwise have done.

Moreover, it became clear that one person is unable to cope with the work owing to the fresh influx of people.

The months when the foregoing extracts from my letters were written are past and gone, but still the Camps continue and increase. Below are the returns up to the end of April for those under O.R.C. control. By this time those numbers are already left behind. More and more families are to be brought in.

REFUGEE CAMPS. O.R.C.

(Return for week ending April 27, 1901.)

| | Whites. | Natives. | Total. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brandfort | 1022 | 2147 | 3169 |
| Vredefort Road | 1373 | 1859 | 3232 |
| Norval's Pont | 1596 | — | 1596 |
| Bloemfontein | 3689 | 1459 | 5148 |
| Winburg | 1145 | — | 1145 |
| Springfontein | 3011 | — | 3011 |
| Heilbron | 1304 | 1219 | 2523 |
| Aliwal North | 1786 | 1859 | 3645 |
| Kroonstadt | 2502 | — | 2502 |
| Edenburg | — | 3048 | 3048 |
| Harrismith | 275 | 252 | 527 |
| Kimberley | 1200 | 200 | 1400 |
| Bethulie | 1125 | — | 1125 |
| Ladybrand | 361 | — | 361 |
| Krommelleboog | 23 | — | 23 |
| | 20412 | 12043 | 32455 |

Increase for week: 2897.

A letter from the Governor of Pretoria tells me of 25,000 in Transvaal Camps.

The Committee should notice the existence also of large Camps of natives, and in some at least of these sickness and death abound.

During the past three months effort has undoubtedly been made to improve the Camps, but difficulties of transport, scarcity of supplies and tents, limited means for outlay, tie the hands of those in authority. Added to this the incompetence of some Superintendents, and an over-centralised system which impedes good work that could and would be done by capable and resourceful local heads of camps. Another bar to advance is the interlacing of civil and military authority, and the unfitness of most military men (however good their intentions) for positions which involve the ordering of the lives of women and children.

Thus the improvements have in many cases been swamped, partly by these things, and partly by the rapid influx of people. For instance, a great blunder was made by bringing an extra 2,000 people into Bloemfontein Camp, already known to be unhealthy and full of fever.

Among the things pressing hardest, and which tend to undermine the health and constitutions of the women, are the following:—

Lack of Fuel.—Imagine three small sticks of wood 18 inches long, or small stony coal enough to fill the well of a soup-plate, for daily cooking. The weekly baking becomes almost impossible, and often the meat cannot be cooked, and the bread is sodden because underbaked.

In Kimberley charity has supplied the bulk of the fuel. In Springfontein mist (dried manure) ekes out the scanty ration, and the women root up a small weed to try and heat their clay-built ovens. Oil stoves would help if oil in any quantity could be procured.

Lack of Beds and Mattresses.—Only a few have beds or mattresses—the great majority lie on the ground. Even if each tent had a bed, it would not accommodate more than one or two inhabitants of the tent. Meanwhile the damp of the ground, the occasional streams of rain that run through, the draughty night air coming beneath the flap of the tent, combine to lower the health of the children and to kill them off in convalescent and delicate stages.

Lack of Soap.—This necessary was not given in any Camp. After much urging and requisitioning, a very occasional and quite insufficient quantity is now doled out.

Diet.—The food is monotonous, and does not suit children. Some vegetable diet is greatly needed. It presses hard when the meat (as often) is maggotty and the coffee coppery and undrinkable.

**Water.**—In Bloemfontein the supply is insufficient, and it is also bad. The clothes of thousands have for months been washed in a small dam of stagnant water only occasionally freshened by rain. It is foul. Many other Camps need washhouses.

**Overcrowding.**—This is very great. Privacy is impossible. In some camps two, and even three, sets of people occupy one tent, and 10, and even 12, persons are frequently herded together in tents of which the cubic capacity is about 500 c.f. In Mafeking and Norvals Pont this trouble is not nearly so bad.

**Shoes, Clothes, and Blankets.**—At first khaki blankets were plentiful. Now they are getting scarce, and there is much need in various places. The nights are very cold.

**Warm** clothes are universally wanted. Those people burnt out are, of course, very bare, and have only been relieved by English, Colonial, and Dutch help. Recent importations have been allowed to bring more with them of both bedding and clothes. Quite recently the Government has provided a little flannelette and dress stuff. Shoes are needed everywhere.

**Sanitary Accommodations.**—This is very inadequate to the number of people. They are separate for men and women, but otherwise wholly without privacy, open to the sun and the rain. Where properly looked after by the authorities all is sweet and clean, but elsewhere, notably Bloemfontein, the effluvia is terrible, making it impossible to approach within fifty yards, unless with nose and mouth tied up. The effluvia reaching one side of the camp makes those tents at times unbearable, and has resulted in tonsilitis and various throat troubles. The people feel these places a terrible degradation.

**Each** camp has now rough, but useful little hospitals. Many necessaries were lacking in these, which I have supplied. The death rate in most of the camps is high. In Bloemfontein it is terrible; 172 deaths had occurred up to the date of my leaving. On Sunday, April 28, fifteen persons died in that camp. It figures out to about 25 per cent.

**The** camp life is felt to be purposeless and demoralising. Mothers are anxious to get young girls out of such an atmosphere if the means were forthcoming to place them in boarding schools.

**Education** is now provided in a partial way for some of the children in some of the camps. Accommodation cannot be got for all. This is due to the energy of Mr. Sargant, Education Commissioner. There have been a few abortive attempts at recreation here and there, but most lack heart to enter into them. Something should be done in this direction.

**To** sum up. There is no doubt that the general discomfort could be vastly alleviated by attention to the points mentioned, but it should be clearly understood that they are suggested only by way of amelioration. The main thing is to let them go. The ruin of most is now complete, but let all who have friends or means left go. Above all one would hope that the good sense, if not the mercy, of the English people will cry out against the further development of this cruel system which falls with such crushing effect upon the old, the weak, and the children. May they stay the order to bring in more and yet more. Since Old Testament days was ever a whole nation carried captive?

The following recommendations are those which were forwarded by me to the War Office by request of the Rt. Hon. St. John Brodrick.—I have, etc.,

EMILY HOBHOUSE.

June, 1901.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS.

Having, by the kindness of Lord Milner, been enabled to visit various women's camps, and bring succour to the people therein detained, I venture to urge the following improvements:

1. In view of the hardening effect of imprisonment upon the hearts and resolution of the women—of the imperfect supply of tents or other shelter—of the scarcity of food—the difficulty of transport—and the appalling effect of camp life upon the life and health of the people, and in support also of recent statements made in the House of Commons, I urge:

That all who still can, should be at once allowed to go:

(a) viz., those who, themselves penniless, yet have friends and relatives in Cape Colony;

(b) Those who have means and could support themselves in the Cape Colony, or in towns on the line;

(c) Those who have houses in towns to which they could go;

(d) Those divided from their children who wish to find and rejoin them.

2. Free passes into towns for all equally wishing to find work there.

3. Equality of treatment, whether the men of the family are fighting, imprisoned, dead, or surrendered.

4. In view of the size of the camps, the sickness and mortality, a resident minister in every camp, or free access to anyone living close by.

5. That, considering the countless difficulties ahead, and the already overcrowded state of the camps, no further women or children be brought in.

6. That, considering the mass of the people are women, and seeing the success in organization of the Matron at Port Elizabeth, a matron, conversant with both languages, be appointed in every camp. Many would undertake this voluntarily. I do not consider this so necessary in the case of Norval's Pont.

7. That, considering the congested state of the line, and the great lack of fuel, any new camp formed should be in a healthy spot in Cape Colony, nearer supplies and charitable aid.

8. That, because all the above, and much more, including the economical distribution of clothing, demands much careful organization, detailed work and devoted attention, free access should be given to a band of at least six accredited representatives of English philanthropic societies, who should be provided with permanent passes—have the authority of the High Commissioner for their work—be absolutely above suspicion, and be responsible to the Government, as well as to those they represent, for their work. Their mother-wit and womanly resource would set rigat many of the existing ills.

9. That the doctor's report on the state of health of the children in Bloemfontein Camp be called for and acted upon.

10. That the women whose applications are appended be at once allowed to leave. Their health is failing under the long strain. All three are good, respectable women.

By request of the Right Hon. St. John Brodrick these recommendations were forwarded to the War Office.

I would like to add one more recommendation, which I consider of great importance, and which was unfortunately omitted from those sent to Mr. Brodrick.

11. That, considering the growing impertinence of the Kaffirs, seeing the white women thus humiliated, every care shall be taken not to put them in places of authority.