

THE WOUNDED IN PRINCE OF WALES' HOSPITAL, TOTTENHAM.

BY NURSE ELSIE SMITH.

Prince of Wales Hospital, Tottenham.

THE wounded soldiers in this hospital occupy the three wards on the lower corridor; we usually have about fifty at a time. In one ward they are nearly all Belgians, and if they are not Belgians, they are either broad Scotch or Irish, and it is very difficult to the uninitiated to understand any of them. One of our English soldiers, when asked what he thought of the Belgians, said, "They are fine! almost as good as the English." They all seem to enjoy "the good time" as they call it, in hospital, and most evenings they have music, and sometimes a concert. Visitors to the hospital think they cannot do enough for the "Tommies," and send them an abundant supply of good things, besides lending their motor cars to take them for drives. Yet underneath it all there is an element of seriousness not unmixed with sadness. Some are eager to get back to the front, but others say that their past experience of fighting is too terrible for words. Though they say that they do not think of themselves while in the thick of it, yet they do sometimes wonder how the wife and children are getting on, and hope that they are all right.

Most of the soldiers here are not very badly wounded; usually some injury to the limbs; and sometimes minor operations are necessary, but, as a rule, they scorn the idea of an anæsthetic. As well as having wounded soldiers, we get a continual stream of Red Cross nurses, who come here to try and learn to be of some help. This brings a little of the outside world into our midst, as most of them have friends at the front. The time is not long enough to teach them much practical knowledge, but some of them do realize that a nurse's life is not all "honey," but calls for a great deal of hard discipline and self-sacrifice, a lesson which all have to learn during this terrible war-time.

IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE.

BY DR. A. E. MOORE.

YOU must take an ekka to get there. What is an *ekka*? Roughly speaking it is a box on two wheels with four corner poles supporting a curtained roof. We sit on the lid of the box as a lady sits on her side-saddle with legs dangling over the wheels. In the shafts a bony, underfed, overworked animal, whose ancient harness is supplemented here and there by string and rags. The *Ekka walla* whips up his steed and away we go bumping, jolting, shaking over the rutty road. We are only going four miles or so. Before the introduction of a railway, a journey of two or three days in an

ekka was nothing out of the common. A ride on an Irish Jaunting Car is the nearest approach to the sensation of riding in an *ekka*.

The journey is uninteresting; Cactus hedges bound the dusty road, the sun beats fiercely on the fields of growing cotton, and here and there patches of yellow, reveal the mustard plant. Dreary stretches of jungle are broken by the glaring white, and sun baked earth, impregnated with saltpetre. An occasional peacock moves slowly and majestically across the road in front of us, and red faced monkeys chatter and gibe as we pass. We are going to inspect a village school in one of our out-stations, and here we are.

The scene is typically an Indian one. Standing back from the road are grouped irregularly the grey mud houses with their dark thatches. In front, a rough piece of land covered with coarse brown grass. Oxen, *pariah* dogs and goats, are lying around or lazily searching for a blade of grass, less shrivelled than the rest. Running up between the houses and bounded by a muddy ditch into which the water splashed over from the well drains, is the high street. The head man of the village and others come down to the road to meet us. He offers us a gold ring to indicate that all he has is ours; a formal Indian courtesy.

The school is a little way up: a low thatched building with a mud verandah. Seated on the floor are some dozen or so scholars, bright faced urchins who furtively grin at each other as they rise to salam.

The teacher, an oldish man, is sitting on the mud verandah. He is one of our evangelists who has done much useful work in this particular village. The examination begins. All the boys are provided with long white-washed boards—the Indian slate—and a wooden pen with some Indian Ink. A piece of dictation is slowly read out to them. Then follows an oral examination. One boy is asked to read out a list of words from his primer. It is quite correct. Then he is asked separate words from the same list, but fails to recognise them. Suspicion aroused, he is asked to read the list from the bottom upwards. He stutters and stammers and fails. Thus it is discovered that he knows the sounds of the words by heart from the beginning of the list, but otherwise the characters convey nothing to him. During this particular examination the teacher crosses over to the corner and resignedly pulls at the *hookah*. One or two of the youths read the Gospels fluently and well. Now comes a repetition of the tables, one boy stands in front and repeats the tables, the whole class repeating it after him. Whenever the other lad is stopped any boy may be called out to follow on.

During this performance the teacher is completing a purchase of some oranges from a passing vendor. Outside a group of interested spectators are standing or squatting, some of them exhibiting justifiable pride at the prowess of their sons. The examination over, evening is falling, and all gather round for the 'Sing Song' such as the Indian loves. Tom-toms, little finger drums and a small harmonium are produced, and one of the elder scholars begins in a minor key one of those haunting strains familiar to every missionary, now loud, now soft, the tom-toms keep

up a weird accompaniment, and now and again the whole assembly takes up an answering chorus. They may continue an hour, or they may continue till mid-night, but we must go.

There is a faint glow in the western sky, the stars like lamps are twinkling above us, and the golden bowl of the rising moon is appearing above the distant trees.

POEM.

SOLILOQUEY OF A CHICKEN.

Most strange ! Most queer ! Although most excellent a change
 Shades of the prison house, ye disappear !
 My fettered thoughts have won a wider range
 And, like my legs are free ;
 No longer huddled up so pitiably :
 Free now, to pry and probe and peer
 And make these mysteries out.
 Shall a *free thinking* chicken live in doubt ?
 For now in doubt undoubtedly I am :
 This problem's very heavy on my mind
 And I'm not one to either shriek or sham,
 I *won't* be blinded and I won't be *blind* !

Now, let me see !

First, I would know, how did I get in there ?
 Then, where was I of yore ?
 Besides, why didn't I get out before ?
 Bless me ! here are three puzzles out of many more
 Enough to make me think again.
 How do I know I ever was inside ?
 Now, I reflect, it is, I do maintain
 Less than my reason, and beneath my pride
 To think that I could dwell
 In such a *paltry* miserable *cell*—as that old *shell*
 Of course I couldn't

How could I have lain

Body, beak and feathers ; legs and wings.
 And my deep *heart's sublime imaginings*.

In there !

I meet the notion with profound disdain
 Since, I declare, (and I'm a *chicken* that)
 (You can't *deceive*)—
 What I can't understand I never will believe !