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Howe (S. G.)

A
L E T T E R

TO

MRS. *Mrs. M. W. Bond*, AND OTHER
L O Y A L W O M E N ,

TOUCHING THE MATTER OF

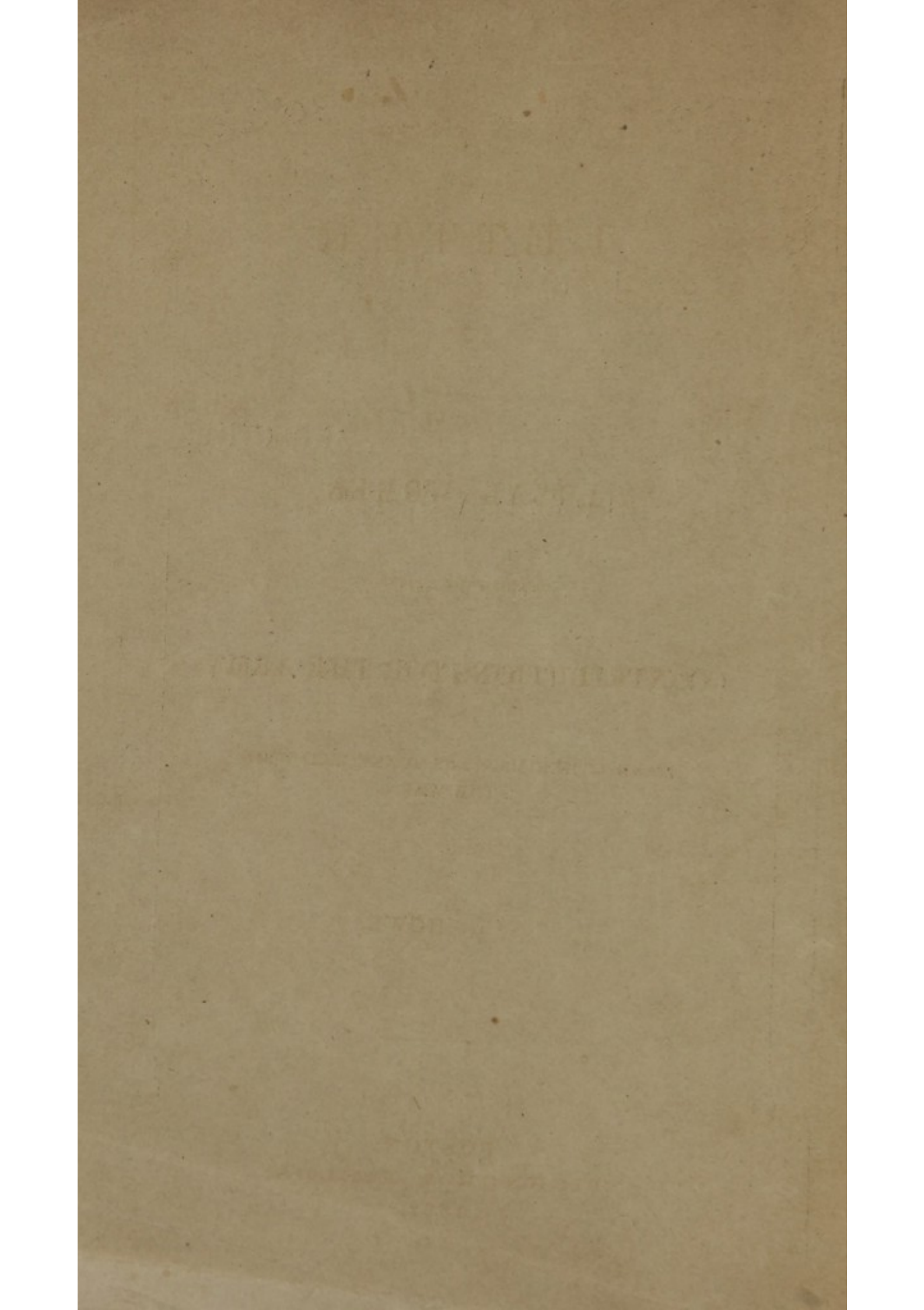
C O N T R I B U T I O N S F O R T H E A R M Y ,

AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH
T H E W A R .

BY

S. G. HOWE.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR & FIELDS,
1862.



A

LETTER

TO

MRS. *Mrs. M. McDonald* AND OTHER

LOYAL WOMEN,

TOUCHING THE MATTER OF

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE ARMY,

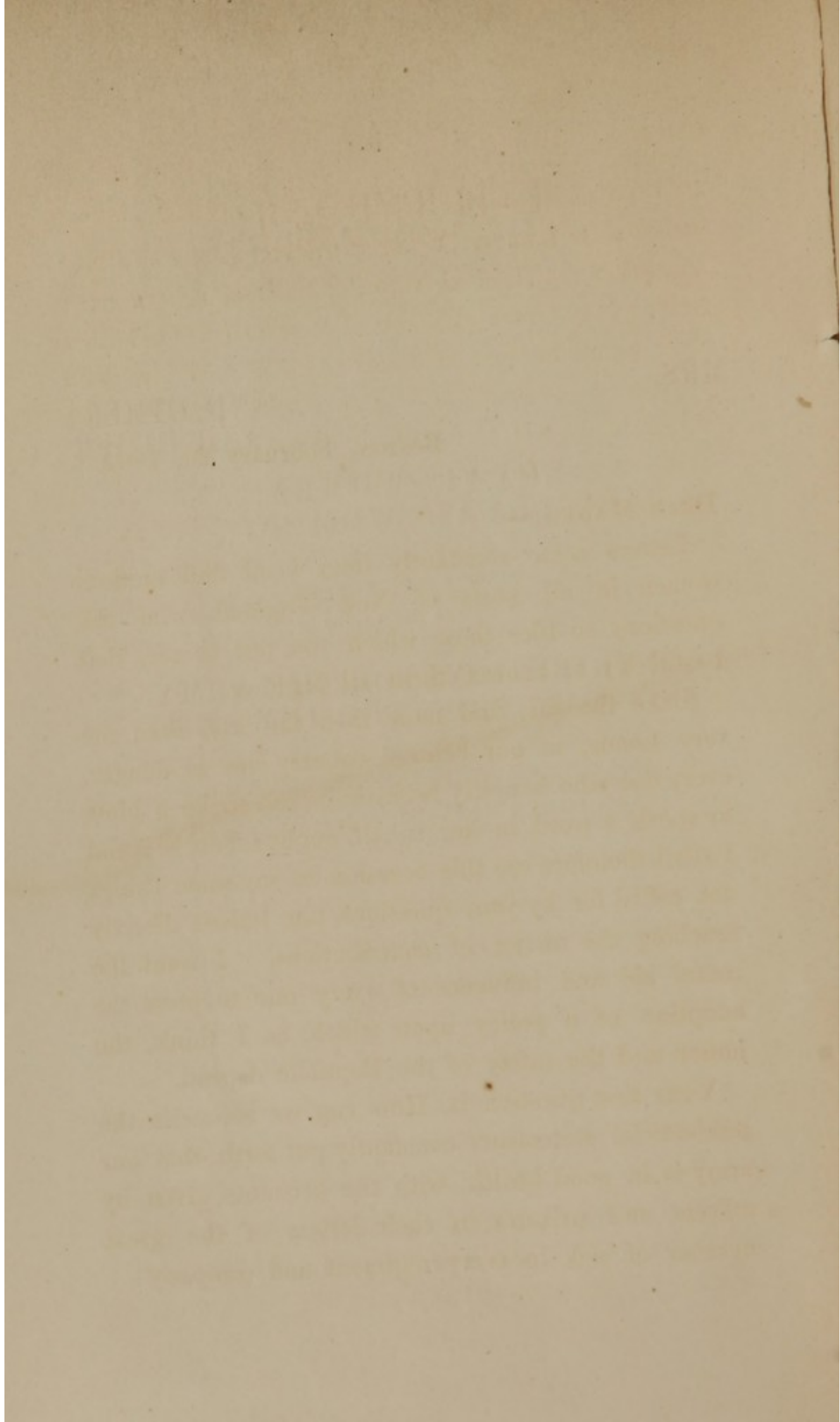
AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH
THE WAR.

BY

S. G. HOWE.



BOSTON:
TICKNOR & FIELDS,
1862.



Boston, February 20, 1862.

DEAR MADAM:—

Letters come constantly from loyal and anxious women in all parts of New England, who ask questions so like those which you put to me, that I will try to answer them all together.

Since the life, and more than the life, even the very honor, of our beloved country are in danger, every one who honestly believes he can strike a blow or speak a word in her behalf, ought to do so; and I shall therefore use this occasion to say some things not called for by your questions, nor indeed directly touching the matter of contributions. I want the moral aid and influence of every one to press the adoption of a policy upon which, as I think, the honor and the safety of the Republic depend.

Your first question is, How can we reconcile the semi-official statements constantly put forth that our army is in good health, with the accounts given by officers and privates in their letters of the great number of sick in every regiment and company?

They are to be reconciled by considering that health is a comparative term. Compared with European armies in the field, ours is healthy; compared with the rebel army it is probably very healthy; but compared with a half million of men at home, it is fearfully unhealthy.

Having seen something abroad of the usual frightful mortality among soldiers in actual war, and read more; and having seen too the manner in which our volunteers were hurried into the field, I believe that the mortality among them would have been vastly greater but for the existence of the Sanitary Commission.

I believe this after giving due weight to the fact that certain officers sneer at the Commission; and to the really important fact that the season has been uncommonly favorable.

The United States Sanitary Commission, projected and animated by its able and energetic president; organized and directed by its wise and humane secretary, has indeed done a great work in the way of preventing disease; the credit of which is due almost entirely to those officers, and to the zealous inspectors and assistants whom they have employed.

But let us look a little more closely at this matter of army sickness and mortality.

Most men take a lively interest in the money cost of war, and want to know all about that. The Treasurer, therefore, hurries up his accounts; he states

how many dollars have been spent; and how many more must be forthcoming; and all the people read, and straightway conclude that they have counted the cost of the war.

But alas! the most costly item of war is human life; and of this people take too little thought.

There is, indeed, a beautiful and perfect system in the army, by which a minute account of every case of sickness and mortality, with its details, is sent up from every regiment to head-quarters; so that it may be ascertained whether on a given day John Doe was sick or well; whether he had the mumps or a fever; how many days he was ill; and whether he got well or died. The elements of the calculation are all there; and we might have as speedy a return of cost of the war in life, as in dollars. But the people do not press; and the Medical Bureau being proverbially a slow, though sure coach, the returns will not come out until after the war is over. At least it has been so heretofore.

Fortunately, however, the Sanitary Commission, not tied up by red tape, has sent out its inspectors, (earnest medical men, who look to prevention of disease,) into all parts of the field. These Inspectors after careful personal inspection of over three hundred regiments, have made over four hundred reports. Each report gives answer to some seventy-five questions, prepared with a view to show the sanitary condition, and the mortality of the troops.

The vast amount of vital statistics contained in these reports has been carefully tabulated by E. B. Elliott, (a very able statistician in the employ of the Commission,) and is already published.

They show that the *constant rate* of sickness in the army of the Potomac is sixty-three to one thousand men; in the army of the West, one hundred and sixteen to one thousand men; in Western Virginia, one hundred and sixty-two to one thousand men!

This means, in plain English, that more than sixty thousand of our soldiers are sick every day. True, every man who is reported unfit for duty is included in this return. He may have only a headache or a cold; a cut or a sprain; and may be on duty again to-morrow. But allowing that only one-third are really ill, you have more than twenty thousand sick soldiers; and can answer, as well as I can, the question so constantly put, "What in the world can they do down there, with so many hospital clothes?"

But there is a fearful truth revealed by these stubborn statistics, which will shock our people when it is fully comprehended. There must of course be much sickness, and many deaths among six hundred thousand men, let them be where they may. It would be at about the rate of one in a hundred, yearly, if they were at home. But our soldiers in the army of the Potomac are dying at the rate of three and a half in a hundred yearly; and in

the army of the West at the rate of five in a hundred !

Try to conceive the awful truth told by these figures. Calculate the rate upon six hundred thousand men ; and look steadily at the product, not as some vague and abstract estimate, but as an awful fact. Ponder it all the more sadly, because it tells far more severely upon our misguided brethren of the South. Think of seventy-five stalwart young men from the North, laid out cold and stiff every day ! Think of over five hundred soldiers, in the very bud and blossom of manhood, dying every week ! Think of half a regiment of Union troops buried every seven days !—twenty-seven whole regiments laid low in a year, not by the sword, but by disease !

Merciful Heaven ! it almost drives one mad, when with this fearful fact before his eyes, and the wail of mothers and sisters, of widows and orphans in his ears, he is told to be patient and silent ; and to hope, at least, that the Government will be *drifted* by *events* away from its serve-God-and-Mammon policy of saving the Union, and saving too the constitutional rights of that institution which is the accursed root of all our bitterness and sorrow, and the only cause of disunion !

Was ever such sacrilegious perversion of words ? Constitutional right to hold men in slavery ! As though all the constitutions ever made, from that of Sodom down to ours, could create *right* out of

wrong, or hold back such fiery punishments of sin as are now raining down upon our devoted land? Republican slaveholders! as though a man holding fellow-men as slaves, can be any more properly called a republican, than one habitually stealing can be called an honest man.

Pardon this outburst; but I lose patience at the delay to strike a righteous and killing blow into the very stomach of this rebellion by proclaiming emancipation under the war power, and enforcing it as fast and as far as we can; since every week's delay costs five hundred lives, and every month's two thousand; to say nothing of the demoralization which is going on.

The Athenians rejected a plan to destroy their enemies, because it required them to do wrong; we reject a plan because it requires us to do right, and to destroy a wrong.

War, bloody civil war, is direful, barbarous, and brutalizing; and it can be justified and sanctified only by high religious and moral motives. Are we justified and sanctified in fighting as we do, slaying and destroying the young and thoughtless part of our people, and bequeathing countless evils upon our posterity, if it be only to avenge a supposed insult to a flag, or forcibly repair a broken political fact, or secure commercial advantages?

Answer ye bereaved mothers, ye mourning widows, are these things worth the blood of your sons and

your husbands? And ye, over whose dear ones the demon of war hovers on black wings, and may soon clutch in his bloody claws, do you not ask a higher price for the dread sacrifice than gratified national pride,—and material national gain? May you not ask for it the freedom of millions of slaves, and the blessings of coming generations?

Besides, our soldiers are the children of the nation, and the Government has no moral right to deny them the benefits of the highest moral incentives it can place before them. We can raise their real wages more by giving them a noble task of freeing men from bondage, than by any amount of pay and bounty.

More than this: we *must* raise the moral standard of our war if we would have our country come out of it with honor, instead of conquering by dint of greater numbers and greater strength.

You next ask *whether it is desirable to send any more supplies of clothing or extra comforts to soldiers in the field?*

To this I answer, No; on the contrary, it is most undesirable.

Do not be led away from sound principles by the pressure of individual cases; and do not be deceived by vague reports; but look carefully at the system and the practice of supplying the army; and you will conclude that more harm than good will come of continuing this form of charity, the tendency of which is to demoralize our men in various ways.

You speak of the stories which reach you about the abuses of the contributions sent by our loyal and noble women, and I am sorry to say that they are founded in truth.

For the most part, in the early months of the war, the contributions for men in the field were faithfully applied. But it is certain that there were even then losses, and waste, and gross abuses of various kinds. These have greatly increased since.

Some officers have been untrustworthy, and basely turned to their own profit what was meant for the men. Many soldiers who did not lack clothing, nevertheless claimed their share of the contributions which came from their towns, and then sold them for money, or bartered them with hucksters and camp-followers for pies, cakes or whiskey.

Some such abuses must necessarily occur, in such a wide-spread and hasty distribution, even if it were conducted by business men, and upon some organized plan; but how many more when the distribution is made by zealous persons who have neither habits of business, nor facilities for doing it, and who work without mutual understanding. The consequence has been that all sort of irregularities and abuses have taken place. Some regiments or companies being laden down with more clothing and extras than they can carry, while others have got nothing.

A remark of mine made in a letter to Governor Andrew, last May, that no more extra stores should

be sent on, gave offence to many at the time. It was as follows:—

“Besides these regular supplies, there is a variety of articles in the greatest abundance, intended for the personal comfort of the soldiers, made up and forwarded by families, friends and committees in the several towns. It would be easy to mention some articles of which our four regiments have enough to supply forty thousand men during a whole campaign. Many of these things will have to be left behind when the troops go into the field. Their principal value (and that is priceless) is as a testimony of the patriotism, zeal and generosity of the men and women who felt that they must do something for the cause which seemed to them, not only of their country, but of humanity. It may be well to say here that, in my opinion, no more extra stores should be sent on. They do not promote the real efficiency, or even comfort of the troops, and they do cause confusion, and even interfere with the regular service in various ways.”

Now see what one of our best surgeons says, eight months later, that is in January last:—

“One word more. The friends of the soldiers who imagine their sons, brothers, wards or friends, as the case may be, as suffering for want of some of the good things and luxuries of life, put themselves to a great deal of trouble and expense to send to camp articles of food, as cheese, cake, pastry, etc., which are not only not necessary and do no good, but more frequently do positive injury. Whenever I see boxes containing such articles coming into camp, I calculate upon an increased number at surgeon's call next morning, and I have rarely miscalculated. However, I suppose such things must be. The expense of transportation is not a small consideration. I know of one instance in which a considerable quantity of cheese was sent to some members of the regiment. The exact cost of this cheese, including purchase and transportation, amounted to two dollars (\$2.00) per pound. The money was misspent. The kind heart that meant well ought to be better instructed.”

The Sanitary Commission early saw the confusion and the abuse ; and decided to do nothing more than to solicit and receive contributions of hospital clothing and stores ; and to give them out solely upon the written requisitions of the surgeons of the respective regiments. This has been adhered to in all cases I believe, except that of the temporary Hospital or Home for weary, or sick, or straggling soldiers in Washington.

The Commission therefore, is not responsible for any of the abuses which have caused so much dissatisfaction and scandal.

But my objections are to the whole system of contributions for men in the field. Whatever it may have been in the outset, it is now not only unwise, but it is harmful, and ought not to be continued.

Never was an army so well paid ; and never was a large one so well fed, and so well clad. The Government has now the means, and the organized method ; and it is beyond a doubt, that save in rare and extraordinary contingencies, the men may draw all needful clothing.

As for the extras, they can and ought to pay for them. It is better to spend their money and preserve their self-respect. Disguise it as we may, if we continue the present practice beyond the period of dire necessity, *we introduce a system of alms-giving and alms-taking* ; and no purity of motive, can avert the

degrading influence of such a system. I hold that the period of dire necessity has passed.

In answer to inquiries upon this point, the surgeon of one of our regiments writes thus, under date of December 30th. "I would say, that in the matter of clothing for the soldiers, that need give our friends in Massachusetts no uneasiness, the supply furnished by the United States Government being amply sufficient; and in this regiment every thing has been brought forward with the utmost promptness, through the indefatigable exertions of our colonel, who devotes his entire military experience and natural capabilities, to promote the comfort of his command. I am certain where complaints are made from other regiments, (if there are any which reach you at home,) the prime cause must exist entirely in the supineness or ignorance of those to whom the welfare of the troops is entrusted."

Another says, "The soldiers of this regiment can and do receive from the United States all clothing requisite for their comfort."

Another, in answer to the question, "Do your soldiers need any more clothing than they can get in the regular way," says, categorically, "No."

Another, in a letter dated January 31, 1861—received while this is going through the press—says:

"I am convinced that any thing more than this, [the regular government supply of clothing,] coming to the soldier in the way of a free gift or charity, is a positive disadvantage to him.

“As with the civilian, the more the soldier is made to depend upon the fruit of his own labor and resources, the better soldier, the better man he becomes. By self-dependence, accompanied by the strict discipline of camp life, he is much more likely to learn the habits of economy, prudence, carefulness, temperance, sobriety, and secure cleanliness; in short to acquire those habits that characterize the true soldier. Who can estimate the value of such habits to the volunteer on his return to civil life? How fruitful of good to the nation is example after such training! The soldier never should have at one time, in his immediate possession, more clothing than what he wears, and what he can easily carry in his knapsack. Suppose he wears out more than the government allowance for the year, which I believe, with due care and economy, need not be; far better that the soldier shall purchase any such needed extra, with his own earnings, than be supplied by charity; on the principle that one values what he earns or produces, and consequently is more likely to make better use of it. Apply generally one single illustration. A soldier with three shirts will always have two dirty ones. With only two, he will improve the first opportunity of time and weather to wash, and consequently always have one clean at his hand. The same in regard to repairs, &c. Other points are involved in the possession of more clothing than the government allows, selling, pawning, gambling, throwing away, &c., according to the disposition and character; it is sufficient to hint.”

I might quote from the letters of other surgeons to the same effect.

No! our men in the field do not lack food, or clothing, or money, but they do lack noble watchwords and inspiring ideas, such as are worth fighting and dying for.

The Southern soldier has what at least serves him as such; for he believes, that he fights in defence of country, home, and rights; and he strikes vehemently, and with a will.

Our men, alas! have no such ideas. The Union

is to most of them an abstraction, and not an inspiring watchword. The sad truth should be known—that our army has no conscious noble purpose; and our soldiers generally have not much stomach for fight.

Look at the opposing armies, and you will see two striking truths. First, the Northern men are superior in numbers, virtue, intelligence, bodily strength, and real pluck; and yet on the whole they have been out-generalled and badly beaten. Second, the Northern army is better equipped, better clad, fed and lodged; and is in a far more comfortable condition, not only than the Southern army, but than any other in the world; and yet if the *pay* were stopped in both, the Northern army would probably mutiny at once, or crumble rapidly; while the Southern army would probably hold together for a long time, in some shape, if their cause seemed to demand it.

The animating spirit of the Southern soldier is rather moral than pecuniary; of the Northern soldier it is rather pecuniary than moral.

Of course, moral here does not mean *virtuous*. Anger, hate, revenge, and the like, are among the forces which intensify the morale of the Southern army, and give to it the *snap* which is so lamentably lacking on our side.

Intensify the morale of our army by higher purposes, by nobler motives, and you will see how much

stronger is a virtuous than a vicious cause, when men are made to feel that it is so ; and how much more hardy and plucky is a Northern than a Southern man.

Our men are in a false position ; not strategically, but morally. The assertion, in all our mouths, that the war *will*, somehow, destroy slavery, is too abstract for them. Men do not go to the death on abstractions. Put it in the concrete, that the war *shall* destroy slavery, and you give the soldier a conscious noble purpose—that of helping to emancipate four millions of men, women and children from cruel bondage. The danger to the Union, if no higher consideration, justifies such a policy. As for the power to enforce emancipation, we shall not know whether we have it, until we try. As for the right, if we may block up harbors, and destroy one source of our national pride, we may set men free, and destroy the only source of our national shame.

Let then indignant and fiery words go forth from the White House,—“death to every resisting rebel ! freedom to every friendly bondsman ! honor and promotion to whoever brings to our side most helpers from the other.” Let these be adopted at head-quarters, and repeated by generals, and colonels, and you will see an answering spirit in the ranks showing what Northern men are, and what they can do ; especially when they hear, (as they would,) the echoing cheers and blessings on the new policy,

from all the women, and all the *male* men of the North.

Try to look a little at the matter, Madam, I pray you, from my point of view, if only for a moment.

In wars carried on by regular armies moral considerations are of little weight; and they become lighter as discipline rises. Hence the seemingly impious proverb that God is always on the side of the heaviest battalions.

Men shrink instinctively from danger, and fear death. All wars and fighting are carried on in view of this. But training enables the veteran to overcome fear, so that the commander may count almost as surely upon his men marching up to the cannon mouth, as though they were machines, let the cause in which they fight be what it may. If he has ten thousand men, and his enemy only eight, the chances in his favor are as ten to eight.

Not so with contending peoples; not so in irregular campaigns; not so with half disciplined armies. In these, the moral nature resumes its sway; and that side is strongest, (almost irrespective of numbers,) on which the passions are most thoroughly aroused.

A people deeply excited, intensified (so to speak,) into disregard of danger and death by hot religious zeal, by fiery patriotism, or by any elevating passion, is unconquerable by any amount of numbers, by any length of persecution, by any thing, in short, save battalions made up of old callous military machines.

History is full of examples where people with nothing for defence save their passions, have successfully resisted invaders who had every thing but passions.

In our war the passions go for much; the discipline as yet for comparatively little.

The North and the South stand in hostile array. Their troops are about equally well, or rather equally ill disciplined. The Southern leaders, playing their old game of brag, by the help of men in buckram, and of paper battalions, display a long front, and a vast force. But history will probably show that the North has five-fold more men, ten-fold more material, and a hundred-fold more of warlike power and resources. And more even than all this, the North has one immense advantage,—an advantage which might have settled the war long ago, and spared much blood and treasure, to wit: that in the very midst of the enemy's country, there were at least four millions of people, (one-third of the whole population,) who, if not repelled by her, would have risen up and hailed her soldiers as friends and saviours, and utterly paralyzed and crippled the South.

Now why is it that with this overwhelming force—with these immense advantages—the North has not already overrun and vanquished the South?

Is it not partly, at least, because the heart of the army has not been impassioned by earnest and high motives, as it might have been?

I have seen men so impassioned and intensified in Greece, in France, in Poland. I have been among our troops, and have failed to find the men so earnest for work, and fight, as to forget about pay, and to rise above the instinctive dread of danger. There is courage in them, doubtless, as there is heat in iron ; but it is latent as yet.

The North, if let alone long enough by selfish powers abroad, and juggling politicians at home, will surely conquer. But, alas ! she will conquer in virtue of being the richest and strongest, while my heart yearns to have her conquer in virtue of her cause being the best, and her men the bravest.

Our cause will be the best, and our soldiers will be the bravest, when we write EMANCIPATION on our banners ; and this war, forced upon us by our enemy, will be justified and sanctified by the noble end to which we shape it.

In the vaunted days of chivalry, brave knights went up and down on the earth, seeking glory by fighting to redress some foul wrong, or to set free some innocent captive. One would think that chivalry had died out from the race, or from the land ; for here stand thousands of really brave officers, all girded for battle ; before them are foul wrongs to be redressed, and captives pining to be free. Would you not think that some swords would leap from their scabbards, and that, with orders, or without orders,

some young men would find or make opportunities for doing deeds worthy of Christian knights?

I am glad to have known one act of heroism ;—to have seen one who, leaving what is dearest behind, and taking life in hand, has gone boldly into the land of bondage where the captives are most numerous ; there, alone and unaided, to do such works of liberation as a cool head and brave heart may find to do. That one, however, is not of our race and color.

It must be confessed that there is a lack of ardor and earnestness in our army for anti-slavery work. Some explain it in one way, some in another. My way is this. Instinctive feelings work blindly, and impel men to action long before they are conscious of purposes. The fact of human slavery in the midst of freedom, bred this strife. But down at the very root of it the blind instincts of conservatism and of democracy, are fiercely contending. The strife would be short were it not for the prejudice of race, which strengthens conservatism, while it ties one hand of democracy. Most of our regular land and naval officers are conservative ; so are many of our volunteer officers ; and so is the great majority of the army of political office-holders, whose chiefs give the watch-words of the war ; but who give no such words as stir the hearts of the people, and of the soldiers.

Such men have, and must have, though unconsciously, a sympathy with the aristocracy of the

South, and they hesitate to strike vehemently at its stronghold, and smash it in pieces. They have no enthusiasm for such work, and of course inspire none in the army. The task is reserved for democracy; not such as we have had,—but for true democracy, when it shall strike in and save a perishing country. God grant it may strike in time to save it and the cause of human freedom, without which it is not worth saving.

But to return to the matter of contributions. You ask, thirdly, *if it has been right and necessary to ask public contributions for the aid of regimental and general hospitals, how long must we continue to call upon the people?* In regard to this, I differ with most of my colleagues of the Commission, some of whom have better means perhaps of judging than I have.

I was reluctant to have the Commission appeal to public charity, even for the hospitals, knowing that the Government ought to do, and wished to do all that was necessary for the soldiers; but I saw that the system of supply could not be perfected rapidly enough to meet the exigency; and I yielded to the necessity of the case. In the circular however, which I sent out with the appeal of the Commission to the Loyal Women of New England, I stated that, in my opinion, it would not be necessary to ask for aid longer than this winter.

That appeal has been answered most nobly. Besides the vast amount of clothing and stores which

have gone from towns in New England, west and south of Boston, and besides that which has been sent by kindred associations, the Boston Branch Office of the Sanitary Commission alone, has forwarded more than a hundred thousand articles of good clothing. Among these were 33,939 pairs of socks, and 7,752 shirts. The cash value of the whole being over \$103,000. But the moral value is beyond estimate.

There is not in all history an instance of more pious and patriotic offering laid upon the altar of country, by women of any land. The Roman women and maidens, in the hour of public danger, brought to the *Ædiles* their trinkets and jewels, but ours bring the fruits of long days and nights of patient toil by their own hands.

I do not think they should be *urged* to further contributions ; because the Government has the means, and has now the experience and the organization necessary to provide for all the wants of the sick ; and it would be a misdirection of public charity to do what the Government can do, and ought to do, and will do. I never felt the force of the argument, that calling for these contributions would keep alive the patriotic fervor of our women. I knew that it was only necessary that the country and the cause should be worthy of the devotion of our women, in order to secure it.

Besides, this chronic state of war is going to furnish an extra amount of charitable work to be done

at home. As for the expeditions about to depart, the government is abundantly able to provide every thing necessary, and to do it more cheaply, systematically, and effectually than we can do it.

The testimony of many of our best army surgeons goes to show that no more contributions are needed, even for the sick. The Hospital funds, now generally organized, suffice to provide comforts, and even delicacies.

As there are many of our women who do not understand this, let me explain it. When soldiers report themselves as sick and unfit for duty, they are put on the sick list, and if really ill, they are taken into the hospital. Of course they do not then want their ordinary rations, their bread and beef, but the value thereof is drawn in money, which goes to form a hospital fund; and this is used to purchase such things as sick men need. By a liberal construction of the army regulations, it may be applied to purchase of clothes.

Some of our regimental surgeons profited by this system at the outset, and those who were skilful administrators soon got together a fund sufficient for all wants. When for instance a man like Dr. Luther Bell directed the organization of Regimental or Brigade Hospitals, every thing necessary was provided; but in other regiments there was lack and suffering for a long time. This explains the extraordinary discrepancy in the accounts which were sent home; one

saying nothing was wanted ; another saying every thing was wanted, and both telling the truth.

It is true there has been some difficulty in so administering the hospital fund as to carry out the benevolent purpose of the Government, but this has been mainly overcome. One of our best Massachusetts regimental surgeons, in answer to my question,

“Would you advise that the people of Massachusetts should be called upon for further contributions, even for the sick and wounded, in regimental or general hospitals? says: In answer to this question, as regards regimental hospitals, I must say, No. I apprehend that there is too much sympathy of a certain kind ; shall I call it morbid? for the ‘hard fare’ and destitute condition of our soldiers, I verily believe that a large proportion of them never ‘fared’ better in respect of clothing, food, money, ‘comforts,’ etc., or ‘enjoyed themselves more,’ as civilians, if half so well. There are hardships and trials ; often, doubtless, of great severity, and which try souls as well as bodies ; but they are incidental to the condition, circumstances and life of the soldier, which no amount of contributions can prevent or alleviate. The answer to this query, however, as applying to regimental hospitals, is resolved in the answers to the two first. In regard to general hospitals, I am not particularly informed ; but it seems to me that under judicious management, the hospital fund ought to supply every needful comfort for the sick, while government provides amply, according to the supply table, in bed and bedding, and other material, with the necessary furniture, etc., for the establishment.”

Again he says :—

“At present, and for the future, there should be no difficulty in securing the full benefit of the hospital for ‘the benefit of the sick and wounded,’ as it is managed by the brigade commissary, and not by the regimental quartermaster. The failure hitherto has arisen, I am disposed to think, from ignorance of duties, rather than from any design to deprive the hospital of it. So far as I am able to judge, the ‘clothing’ for field hospitals, consisting of bed and bedding, as provided by government, is sufficient. More of the kind might

add temporally to comfort, but this extra, in case of a change of station, could not be transported; and here I will say, that a great deal of material has been sent to us for hospital use, which was entirely unavailable; and we have been under the necessity of sending it to some one of the stationary hospitals, where alone it could be of any essential service. Once more in regard to the hospital fund, there must be either ignorance, carelessness, neglect, or culpability, where those sick soldiers are to be treated, if a hospital fund is not created; and when created, if its money-value is not obtained and made available for their 'comfort.'"

This surgeon's letter is so full of common sense, and really kind feeling, that I will quote another sentence or two, although not immediately connected with this question. He says:—

"I most heartily desire that the volunteer service could be made to conform more nearly to that of the regular. This, I suppose, must be the work of time. But they ought to act upon the same basis now in every minute particular. In the regular service, there is taken from among the enlisted men, a tailor and shoemaker for each company, and a barber for a regiment; these receive their regular pay as soldiers, and perform no other duties but the practice of their respective trades. For the service thus rendered, in repair of clothes and shoes, and shaving and cutting hair, a certain amount of compensation is paid by the soldier who receives it. This operates well for all concerned. It is a motive for the performance of the work, and for doing it well. It enables every soldier to practice economy, and to exercise care in the preservation of clothes and shoes. For want of this arrangement in the volunteer service, coupled with the idea of ample supply from the free gifts of the benevolent, there is much needless waste in the regular service, the soldier, at the end of his term of enlistment, (five years,) generally finds, on final settlement of his accounts with the government, a considerable balance in his favor, in the item of clothing alone. Why cannot this obtain among the volunteers?"

The Commission, mainly through the zeal and eloquence of its able President, set on foot a move-

ment by which the women of the North came earnestly and effectually to the aid of the Government, in its emergency, and eked out its scanty means to supply the wants of the sick and wounded in Hospitals. The Commission showed the want and the way to supply it. I think that the emergency has passed; and that the Government can now do all that is needful for the soldiers better than the people can, so long as it is supplied with money.

Bear in mind that the Sanitary Commission was not formed with the view of collecting contributions from the people, and applying them to the aid of the sick. It undertook that work in a time of pressing necessity and has done it thoroughly and well.

You know that the Commission has other and more important duties; and that for the means of performing these it must depend upon the public. The Commissioners themselves receive no pay, and want none; but they have to employ men who go about among the troops, and strive to prevent abuses of various kinds, to fight off disease and death, or to lessen their ravages; and these men must be paid. This work of the Commission can only be carried on by contributions from the people until the Government shall take it up, and do it through its own organization. The merchants of New York, Boston and Philadelphia have hitherto mainly supplied the means. If the women of your place would help in the work, and would join with others, and

support in the field one of the zealous and able Inspectors of the Commission, they would do an important and blessed work.

Finally, repeating that I do not speak for the Commission, I advise the loyal women not to send any more extras of any kind to soldiers in the field, and not to undertake any more work than they have now in hand, even for the hospitals.

I know this advice will be unacceptable; but I know how zealous, how unselfish, how untiring, is their patriotism, (would to God that of men were as much so,) and I know it will urge them to work for their country in some way which is neither of doubtful value, nor injurious to more pressing calls of charity.

If any have means to spare, they will strengthen the hands of the Commission more, as I think, by sending to the treasurer five dollars in cash, than by sending twenty-five dollars' worth of clothing.

To those who continue to work, I commend the able and efficient organization at 22 Summer Street.

Faithfully yours,

S. G. HOWE.

LIST OF ARTICLES

Received from various Societies of Loyal Women, at the Boston Branch Office of the United States Sanitary Commission, up to February 1, 1862.

ARTICLES.	Number.	Estimated value.
Pillows,	13,287	\$16,688 75
Blankets,	7,113	14,226 00
Quilts,	9,322	13,983 00
Socks, pairs,	32,557	12,896 82
Comforters,	7,369	11,053 50
Shirts,	7,752	9,690 00
Sheets,	8,854	6,640 50
Pillow-cases,	15,458	3,864 40
Drawers,	4,877	3,657 75
Under-shirts,	2,704	2,028 00
Dressing-gowns,	1,394	1,742 50
Mittens,	3,992	1,516 96
Wrappers,	1,539	1,539 00
Towels,	11,459	1,489 67
Slippers, pairs,	1,861	980 50
Hankerchiefs,	3,456	864 00
Cushions,	2,101	798 38
Bed-ticks,	288	216 00
Pillow-ticks,	331	125 78
Hospital Stores, packages,	335	1,675 00
Sundries, packages,	247	370 50
Bandages and Lint, packages,	505	-
Books, packages,	313	-
Pamphlets, "	325	-
Cash,	-	630 82
	137,439	853.54 \$106,822 25 100,900.55

