

**Two reports concerning the aid and comfort given by the Sanitary Commission : to sick soldiers passing through Washington / by Frederick N. Knapp.**

**Contributors**

Knapp, Frederick Newman, 1821-1889.  
United States Sanitary Commission.  
National Library of Medicine (U.S.)

**Publication/Creation**

[Washington] : [Office of the Sanitary Commission], [1861]

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/h3f7t2af>

**License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by the National Library of Medicine (U.S.), through the Medical Heritage Library. The original may be consulted at the National Library of Medicine (U.S.) where the originals may be consulted.

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.

# SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 35.

---

## TWO REPORTS

CONCERNING THE

Aid and Comfort given by the Sanitary Commission

TO

SICK SOLDIERS PASSING THROUGH WASHINGTON.

---

BY FREDERICK N. KNAPP,  
SPECIAL RELIEF AGENT.

---

## FIRST REPORT.

OFFICE OF SANITARY COMMISSION,  
*Treasury Building, September 23, 1861.*

TO FRED. LAW OLMSTED, ESQ.,  
*Secretary of the Sanitary Commission:*

SIR: In answer to your request, I submit the following report, as Special Relief Agent of the Sanitary Commission:

The main purpose had in view in this agency has been to lessen the hardships to which the ignorance of the sick volunteers and their officers of the forms and methods of government make them subject while in the city of Washington, and to provide for certain wants of the volunteers, when

detached from their regiments, for which the government arrangements had been inadequate, and which the regular inspectors of the Commission, in their visits to camps and hospitals, could not attend to.

Practically, the chief duty has been—

First. To supply to the sick men of the regiments arriving here such medicines, food, and care as it was impossible for them to receive, in the midst of the confusion, and with the lack of facilities, from their own officers.

Second. To furnish suitable food, lodging, care, and assistance to men discharged from the general hospitals, or from their regiments, but who are often delayed for a number of days in the city before they obtain their papers and pay.

Third. To give assistance and information, and secure transportation to men who arrive at the station house in small numbers, and want to find and join their regiments. Some of these are men accidentally left behind; some are men who have been detained by order for a few days at hospitals in Philadelphia or Baltimore.

The facilities for carrying out this aim of the Commission have been, until recently, very deficient. There was no fit place at the reception buildings where sick men could be made comfortable; no means near at hand for providing such food as was needed. Government did not recognise the necessity or fitness of such provision.

On August 9, General Mansfield issued an order, directing the officers in charge of the reception buildings to furnish all facilities in their power to members of the Sanitary Commission who wished to give comfort to the sick soldiers. But the facilities in their power were small, as, at that time no cooking was permitted there; except hard bread, only



uncooked rations were supplied; and there were no beds allowed in the building, as its object was simply for "reception" of troops.

The most that we could do, therefore, was to have a place assigned us—part of the smaller building, the "Cane Factory"—where we put the sick as they came in, separate from the crowd of the other building; and here we had a pile of blankets, from which we made such beds as we could, and then brought tea and coffee and supplies for the men from the restaurant in the station house, or, more often, from a boarding-house on Pennsylvania avenue.

When the regiments whose sick men we had charge of went to camp, they usually carried their sick with them, unless the men seemed too feeble to go; in which case we saw that the men were taken to a general hospital, or else we kept them in charge a few days longer, until the regimental hospital could be put into comfortable condition.

Sometimes the sick of a regiment just arrived occupied a separate passenger car, and remained in the car until the regiment moved; in that case we supplied them with tea and coffee and needed refreshments in the car.

Often the surgeon of the regiment had no medicine at hand for the sick, it being locked up in his chest, which could not be reached in the baggage car. In that case we obtained for him such medicines as immediate needs required.

When we found men from general or regimental hospitals waiting to get their discharge papers filled out, and for their pay, we took them in charge, sheltered and fed them, and if they needed help, we rendered it.

When we found men who were too weak to bear the fatigue of going with their papers, we took charge of the

papers ourselves, had them filled up, obtained the signature of the men to blank receipts for money due to them by government, and thus, by consent of the paymaster, received the money, and paid it over to the men. This privilege could only be granted in cases of absolute necessity.

When we found men seeking their regiments, we directed them (from a record of the location of the various regiments kindly furnished us by General Williams;) if they needed money, we gave it to them; if they were weak, obtained an order for an ambulance, or an army wagon, or a railroad pass, by which they were sent to their respective stations.

In many cases, men who were discharged left their regimental hospitals sadly in need of clean garments, especially shirts, stockings, and drawers. In such cases, before they started for home, we made the men clean and comfortable.

When we found men at the reception buildings in need of medical treatment, but not sick enough to be sent to the general hospital, we called in a physician, unless their own surgeon could be obtained.

As a general rule, we were each day at the station—early in the morning, late in the evening, and at mid-day, and whenever the arrival of a regiment was expected.

The men in charge of the reception buildings, and of the rations, and those who had in charge the locating the newly-arrived regiments, were kind, attentive, and ready to coöperate with us, so far as it was in their power, and in accordance with their instructions.

About the 20th of August, government ordered cooked rations (cold meats and bread and hot coffee) to be ready for the regiments on their arrival at the station. This afforded some relief to men who were well, but did not furnish



the food needed by the sick, leaving to us still most of our work to do.

On Friday evening, August 30th, the provost marshal visited the reception buildings, and issued orders that no men going or coming be allowed to remain in the buildings longer than six hours, as the buildings were for the reception of troops, not for hospital purposes. This obliged us to provide immediately some other place where we could take such soldiers as, from the necessities of the cases, required more than six hours of shelter or care.

We fortunately obtained part of a house near the station, on Capitol Hill, (the second house from the railroad, on the street running from the rear of the station to the Capitol,) and on Saturday night it was furnished with beds and all conveniences for the accommodation of thirty to forty men ; and that night there were twenty-one invalid soldiers resting there.

The rooms of this house are large and high, and are well ventilated. One room is 19 by 33 feet, and 10 feet high ; the other room 19 by 33 feet, and 13 feet high ; each room with four windows opening to the floor. There is a broad piazza to each room. There is a front entrance independent of the rest of the house, and stairs have been built from the rear window down to the out-buildings beyond. It is hired by the month at a reasonable rent ; and an arrangement has been made with the woman who lives in the house—a most judicious, worthy, and kindly person—to take care of the rooms, and to furnish such board and general supplies to the men as we may order ; also to furnish all additional care to those who may require it. We have a store-room there, with such clothing and comforts as may be demanded. An arrangement has been made with Dr. Grymes, an expe-

rienced physician living near by, to be at the house every morning and evening, and prescribe for such men as require treatment. Rules in regard to neatness, behavior, &c., have been prepared, to which the men received there are obliged to conform.

Our own store-room furnished much of what was needed to fit up the rooms.

Some of the men taken to this house require only the shelter and beds for the night, and then in the morning take their rations with their regiment at the reception buildings. Others, more seriously sick, or just out of hospitals, need to remain and be cared for longer.

It is not the plan to consider this, in any sense, a *hospital*, but only as a place where the weak can rest and be cared for, and the sick remain awhile until they are otherwise provided for ; and also where those returning home, who have no claim upon hospital or camp or station-house, may be sheltered if obliged to remain near the station more than six hours. Therefore, as a general thing, men will remain in the house but one, two, or three days at any given time. We call the place "The Soldiers' Home."

I will note down in brief some points from the journal which I have kept.

Friday, Aug. 9th. Go early to the station-house. Find in a passenger car 36 sick men of an Indiana regiment, which had arrived in the night ; found the car hot and very dirty, of necessity ; water-closet beyond use or endurance ; one surgeon is absent up town for medicine, (medicine chest is under baggage,) the other surgeon has gone to get leave to take to the hospital some of the sick. The men had eaten nothing for 24 hours, except hard bread and water ; nothing else could be obtained.



As the first work, I employed a black man to reduce the water-closet to a sanitary state, and some other parts of the car likewise ; then got at a boarding-house two pails full of tea, and a half bushel of bread and butter, for distribution, with some other little comforts for those most sick. These men were left in the car from no neglect, but because the reception buildings were too much crowded for the sick to be put there. In about an hour the surgeons returned ; they were attentive to the men, and seemed grateful for our kindness to them ; they desired themselves to have provided for the comfort of their sick, but did not know which way to turn. Soon the army wagons and ambulances took the sick men to join in the move toward an encampment. But the poor fellows were fed.

Saturday, Aug. 10th. After visiting the newly-arrived regiments, and giving some comforts to the sick, I found around the station-house on New Jersey avenue thirty-six men of a regiment, who had dropped out of the ranks the afternoon before, as they moved from below Alexandria to Bladensburg. It had been an intensely hot afternoon, and the march was evidently forced, (some of the officers were mounted.) I found upon inquiry that one man dropped out beyond the Long Bridge, and was left in charge of two comrades, (he died that night,) and the others fell out all along through the streets ; no officer was detailed at the time to collect these men, or to care for them. Knowing that Bladensburg was somewhere on the railroad, the stragglers had all found their way during the evening to the station-house. They had eaten nothing since Friday noon, and were many of them quite exhausted. I brought them such supplies as I could, bread enough at least. One man I found apparently asleep, lying on the brick sidewalk in the hot sun with the



others ; but upon trying to arouse him, as his companions said he was very sick, I found he was entirely unconscious. A physician was called in, and after a half hour the man was restored to consciousness. From Dr. McLaren I obtained an order to send the sick men to the general hospital ; from Gen. Mansfield an order to pass the other men to Bladensburg on the cars. Meantime, however, an officer of the regiment came to the station-house and marched twenty of the men to the camp. The others were left ; they were too weak to march ; and at 5½ o'clock they were sent by cars. During this time no surgeon of the regiment had informed himself of the condition of these men. The man sent to the hospital was in a very weak state for a number of days ; except for timely aid, he, too, would doubtless have died.

Aug. 11th, a. m. Furnish tea and food to 10 or 12 men who arrived in the night, and remained in the ambulances on the freight cars. They were otherwise well cared for, but needed more than hard bread and water. Also "gave comfort" to the sick—some 15 or 20 of them—of another regiment, who spent the previous night in the Cane Factory. At 6½ or 7 p. m., a Pennsylvania regiment arrived in the train. The regiment marched into quarters upon the avenue, leaving their sick to spend the night in the baggage cars. We took them into the building, and gave them supper, shelter, and in the morning a breakfast. There were of these, sixteen men and six women. Three of the men were so sick that in the morning they were carried to the general hospital.

Aug. 12th. Look after these Pennsylvania men, and a few others.

P. M., at 6½ o'clock; thirty men arrive, belonging to the Wisconsin 5th, in charge of a sergeant. He left them immediately to go to headquarters to get wagons to transport them to their camp. They were men sent on from the hospital at Baltimore. They had no provision for supper. We supplied them, and at about 9½ they were packed into the wagons which had arrived. Had I seen the sergeant beforehand, he would gladly have let them rest for the night in the reception house. Meantime, at about 8 o'clock, thirteen men and one woman, of the Wisconsin 6th, arrive from Baltimore hospital, without any one in charge of them. They had been merely told to go to Washington, and join their regiment. We gave them supper, made them comfortable for the night, and after breakfast they were taken to their encampment.

I will turn now merely to the record of the few last days, though meantime we were enabled in various ways, by furnishing shelter, or food, or fresh clothes, to give comfort to many.

Aug. 28th. Eighteen men arrive at station-house, from a Massachusetts regiment, to go home discharged; but there is some defect in their papers. The surgeon, who has care of the men, is obliged to go up the river twenty-eight miles, where the regiment is in camp, and he is grateful to us for taking the men under our charge until his return. Those who are well enough have eaten army rations (provided them, by order of Capt. Beckwith, abundantly) at the reception-house; those more unwell have been furnished by us with comforts. They were here, in need of care, from Wednesday noon until Monday afternoon. And when they left, they were very grateful.

On Sunday night, Sept. 2d, we had in the new Home



eighteen Massachusetts men, and ten sick men of the Tammany regiment, who were delayed here two days through some defects in their papers of discharge. There were also three other sick men, who came with a Pennsylvania regiment on Saturday, and one Maine man, who came from the hospital at Annapolis with the surgeon's certificate of inability, but was too much exhausted by the journey to go over to Alexandria, where his regiment was located, to get his papers made out. He is resting here.

Monday night, Sept. 3d, there were 18 in the house; the Massachusetts men having left, and four new men having come in; the Tammany men still remaining.

Sept. 9th. Thirty men arrive at the station-house from Annapolis hospital; some of them to join their regiments, some to be discharged. They receive from Captain Allen passes, so that they need not be arrested as they go through the city to report themselves at headquarters; but they have not a cent of money, and its a long walk—a mile or more—for sick men to take; and they must carry their knapsacks, too. Therefore I furnish to each man money enough to pay his omnibus fare up there and back again, so that he can return for the night to the Home if he is delayed. Some ten or fifteen of these men returned; their regiments were too far off to be reached that night.

The next day, (Sept. 10th,) a number more—some twenty men—arrived from Annapolis hospital; we give aid to these as to the others, receiving some of them for the night. It is a little thing thus to give to a man enough to pay an omnibus fare, and to buy a meal; but when that little aid is given to each one of fifty or a hundred weary men each week, the aggregate of fatigue and anxiety which is relieved is not small in its sum; and I am sure that if the friends at



home could purchase it at ten-fold its cost for those who are weary by the way, they would consider it cheaply bought.

Sept. 11th. There were last night in the "Soldiers' Home," as we now call it, twenty-five men resting. Among them were a number of Berdan's sharpshooters; none of them were sick enough to go to a hospital, but some of them will doubtless be saved from serious illness by two or three days of rest and care. These men represent a large class of soldiers now arriving, who come in companies of fifties or hundreds, not yet organized into regiments, and therefore having no surgeon with them. To such we feel that we can render especial service.

Sept. 12th. A number discharged from a Maine regiment, but who arrived in the city too late to get their pay, after wandering about for some time found their way to the Home. They were without shelter and without money, for they had expected to arrive from their camp in Virginia in season to receive the money due to them, and start for home in the evening train. At first these men seemed unwilling to accept what they thought was charity; but I assured them that we were only supplying to them some of the very comforts which their own friends, perhaps, in Maine had sent on "for the soldiers," (for Maine has not been unmindful of the call made upon her.) I fancied that they rested better that night for the assurance; they did not feel so far away from home.

Sept. 13th. Last night we sheltered thirty-eight men, and furnished fresh clothes to some who were sorely in need. Among those to whom we gave comfort was one man whose earnest tone peculiarly impressed me; so I note the particulars. When I went to the reception-house in the evening I found there this man who looked tired and worn. I



asked him if he was one of the men to be discharged. He said no, but that he had walked over twenty miles, and had hurried most of the way. Some two weeks ago, he received the news of his mother's death and his father's sickness, but he could not obtain leave of absence; yesterday it was telegraphed to him that his father had died; he now obtained a furlough for six days; but he had twenty-two miles to walk before he could reach the cars; he started early, but arrived here a half hour too late for the train, and consequently would not be in Philadelphia in time for the funeral of his father. His wife was not living, but he had a little girl, three years old, in aid of whose support the city of Philadelphia paid fifty cents per week. He showed to me some of his letters from what was once his home. Realizing, as I thought, in my own heart, the sad loneliness and weariness and disappointment which I knew he must experience, I said to him, Now tell me honestly, for I want to know, just how a man feels when he is situated as you are; do you not wish you had never enlisted, and so were not obliged to start for camp again in three days after you reach your child? He answered, "No, sir; you can't make me say that. I enlisted because I loved my country, and I was determined to fight for her, and if every friend I have got in the world dies while I am away, I will not wish I had staid at home." This man had borrowed of his captain barely money enough to pay his railroad fare both ways. I added something to this, but he was unwilling to take it till I told him it was for his little girl.

Sept. 15. Last night there were only twelve men in the Home. But early this morning we received sixteen men from a Michigan regiment, which arrived in the night. None of these, excepting four who were sent to the general

hospital to-day, were very sick ; but with slight illness at first, they were entirely worn down and prostrated by the fatigue of a long journey, without rest, from Michigan. Just at this point of time, a day and night of sleep, and some little care, will probably save them from a serious illness. Tuesday or Wednesday their regimental hospital will be ready, and they will then go there.

Sept. 16. Although four thousand troops have arrived in the last 24 hours, there were but four sick men among them, except those of the Michigan regiment. The other regiments were from New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island. The inspection of troops, previous to their enlisting, is evidently more thorough than with the earlier regiments.

Just before night I met ten of the Garibaldians, who arrived in the city too late to get their pay. They are from the regimental hospital—sick and discharged. I told them how to find their way to the Home ; and, after a comfortable supper, they are now resting.

Sept. 17. Last night there were forty-five men in the Home, more than half of them needing medical treatment. This morning one poor fellow left, who has been here anxiously waiting ten days for his papers, which had been sent to Poolesville to have a correction made in them. He is very sick with consumption, and every day of his unnecessary delay seemed a wrong to him.

Sept. 18. This morning all but twelve men left for their regiments, or for home ; to-night thirty more of the sick came in from the four regiments that arrived. This afternoon I went to a regiment over the river, and obtained from a captain twenty dollars, which he had wrongfully or carelessly charged to a young man when his papers were made



out. Three other cases similar to this have previously claimed our attention.

From the 19th until the present time our chief attention has been given to the newly-arrived regiments—some seventeen regiments having come in during the five days. The number in the Home the past week has been from forty-five to fifty each night. Meantime, some men have been sent to us from regiments already in camp, but who were not provided with hospital tents. Most of these we transferred to the general hospital.

The number of soldiers who have thus received care at the hands of the Commission (some more, some less ; some a single night's lodging ; some five or six days' shelter and support) is not far from seven hundred. This covers the time from August 9th to September 23d.

In this connection, it may be proper to say that these facts give increasing evidence of what a vast amount of delay, and consequent fatigue and anxiety, would be saved the soldiers who are sick and discharged, if the officers, whose duty it is in the various regiments to make out the discharge papers, could be led to feel the importance of making themselves thoroughly acquainted with all the forms required, and then would carefully regard them. Humanity, as well as official faithfulness, demands this. The paymaster, of course, is not authorized to give a man his money upon a discharge that has a single flaw in it ; so the man has to go back to the regiment again with his papers, and the delay is certainly a wrong to the sick man, who thought he had fairly started for home.

I may also state that there is now established by government a much more perfect system for sending to their respective regiments the soldiers who arrive without officers.

Allow me, likewise, to add, that in this formal report no record is made of what, after all, is one of the most valuable and most grateful methods by which "aid and comfort" are given to these soldiers, namely, by the expression of the sympathy which they receive at our hands, by the word of good cheer, by the assurance that some one is waiting to help them on. And this has a tenfold value to them when they receive it, not as from one individual, but as from a thousand hands reached out from a thousand hearts, that bear with them constantly the thought of helping and strengthening our soldiers who have left their homes.

In conclusion, I would say, that we hope to accomplish still more good, and render aid and comfort still more effectually, as by degrees system and methods for greater efficiency are worked out. In an undertaking of this kind, one cannot mark down a plan of operations so much as follow the lead of circumstances.

Respectfully.



## SECOND REPORT.

WASHINGTON, *October 21, 1861.*

TO FRED. LAW OLMSTED,

*Secretary of Sanitary Commission :*

SIR : My first report bore date of September 10th. After it was approved and ordered to be made a document of the Commission, some delay occurred in printing, enabling me to bring the report down to September 23d, which, with the approval of the Secretary, was done, so far as the additional details were of general interest ; and they are now presented to you, in printed form, in connection with the first official report. Other matters of expense and methods, embraced in that time, will be connected with the present statements.

Up to September 10th, the number of soldiers who had received aid and comfort at the hands of the Commission, as previously stated, was about 300 ; from September 10th to September 23d, the number was about 400 ; from September 23d to the present time, the number has been 1,094. Total from September 10th to the present date, 1,494.

The men who have been relieved were mostly of the same classes as those indicated in the first report, viz : the sick of newly-arrived regiments ; men returning from hospitals at Annapolis or Baltimore ; men waiting for their discharge papers or their pay ; men who had received their discharge papers, but needed a day or two of rest before starting for home.

To all of these shelter or food, or medical treatment or direction, or money were given, according to the needs of

each case. And as before, so now, fresh clothes were furnished to a number who otherwise would have carried one of the worst marks of the war home with them.

Besides these men, however, at the time when the troops were pouring in so rapidly, we received from day to day a number of soldiers brought to us from the regiments already in camp near by. These regiments, in the unusual demand for supplies, were not furnished with hospital tents, and the general hospitals were too much crowded, or the men not sick enough, to make it desirable to have them sent there. With these men in the house, the Home assumed, for a week or two, essentially the character of a hospital.

But besides these, again, within the past three weeks, we have had a new class, viz : men belonging to regiments moving from Washington to Annapolis for special service. A number of cases have occurred where the regiments have struck their tents and marched to the railroad station, bringing all their sick with them in ambulances, expecting to take the cars at once ; but they were detained there waiting sometimes for 24 hours. In all such cases we have immediately received the sick into the Home ; and there they remained until the train which was to take them was ready to start. Some nights we have had as many as twenty such from one regiment, who otherwise (though just removed from a regimental hospital) would have been obliged to have slept on the floor of the reception-house, or else in the army wagons and ambulances. Many of these were men who needed all the care we could give them.

One night, October 9th, as I came out of the house, there were four army wagons drawn up in a line in front of the Home, waiting the word to carry men (38 in number) to the cars, which were to start for Annapolis ; and there I



found the wagons standing the next morning, and the regiment did not get under way until the following afternoon ; but during all this time these 38 men were receiving assurance that the Sanitary Commission kindly provided for the sick soldiers.

Last Saturday night we found at the reception-house about forty women and children, (22 women and 19 children,) belonging to the seven companies of regulars who had just arrived from Utah Territory, They were much worn with their two months' journey. None of the little children were over six years old. We brought them all up to the Home, giving them the large rooms on the second floor to themselves. It was a new sight to see so many little children there, but it was a pleasant one ; and it was right, too ; for by giving thus for the time some of the protection of a home to these wives and children, I am sure we gave the very best "aid and comfort" to those weary men at the reception-house. Most of the women and children remained here until yesterday. We regretted that we had not still greater facilities for rendering them comfortable, but such as we had we gladly gave to them.

Dr. Grymes, the physician to the Home, in his report, dated October 10th, says :

"I have professionally treated over 400 soldiers since the opening of the house—some of them very sick. I have sent 36 to the general hospitals from the Home, and others from the Depot. I have given medicine to many who were directed to call here for advice. I have furnished medicines to various regimental surgeons arriving at the station-house ; and, whenever the opportunity has occurred, have conversed and advised with them upon the prevailing dis-

eases of our section of the country ; and I have informed them what disposition they could make of their sick."

The largest number in the house at any one time has been 91, the smallest number 13. On many nights in succession the number has exceeded 50.

An accurate record has been kept of the names of all received at the Home, with the dates of their arrival and their leaving, excepting where men were brought in merely to lodge for a night. In that case the number of men thus sheltered was put down.

The cost of boarding these men during this time, included in this report, according to the bills herewith transmitted, has been about \$900.

We now have the use of the whole house, of which we previously occupied but part. The rent is paid by government. We are now also allowed to draw rations for all the men received at the Home. This new arrangement has been made about two weeks. Mrs. Murry, the woman who before kept the house, a very faithful, kindly, and experienced person, is now employed in the same service for the Commission.

Mr. J. Boylston Clark, an unpaid assistant, during the last few weeks has rendered me much help, and kindly offers to continue the work so long as he is needed. He is a man of judgment and efficiency.

The surgeon, Dr. Grymes, has been devoted in his attention to the sick men received at the Home. He has been there at all hours of the day and night ; he is kind in manner, judicious in his practice, and never impatient or weary.

The existence of the Home and its services are becoming generally known. We now frequently have men, on their way home, sent directly to our care from their regiments.



A number of letters of grateful thanks have been received from men who had arrived at their own homes after resting at this Home on the way.

Water for a bath-room has not yet been introduced into the building. Certain difficulties were in the way which, we think, have now been overcome, and an order will probably be issued soon by government to have the water brought in.

In this connection, it may be well to state that the agent of the Sanitary Commission, from time to time, has made a report to the officer in charge of changes and repairs needed at and around the reception-house, and the house where rations are served ; and the suggestions have always been received and acted upon.

There is a room in a small new building near the station-house, where men who are sick with measles are placed if they arrive in the night, or cannot be immediately sent to the general hospital. To this room, tea and necessary supplies are sent from the Home.

All the men connected with the reception-buildings have been uniformly ready to coöperate with us, and they have frequently brought the sick men from the station-house to the Home.

Among the 1,800 men received at the Home, there has not been a single case where rudeness or disrespect has been shown, but uniformly thoughtfulness and expressions of gratitude.

With reference to the diseases of the men who, from time to time, come under our care, I should say that at least three-quarters of the discharged men, composing one-third of the whole whom we receive, are persons who, ac-

ording to their own testimony, were more or less diseased before they left their homes, and who would never have been allowed to enlist except for the culpable carelessness of the medical officers who inspected these same men before their enlistment. I have taken special care to inform myself upon this point, so far as I could from the opportunity afforded me of talking with three or four hundred discharged men. At one time we had nineteen discharged men from one regiment, and it was their united testimony that "the surgeon who examined them as recruits passed them off at the rate of a company of ninety men in an hour." The attention of public officials who have this matter in charge ought surely to be drawn to these facts. By such carelessness private homes suffer, the public service suffers, and the good name of the army, as a place where the health of the soldier is cared for, suffers. It is a wrong all round.

With reference to other men who come under our care—not discharged, but belonging to newly-arrived regiments—I should say that one-half of these are men who ought never to have been allowed to enlist, while the other half is made up chiefly of men who, though ill when the regiment was called upon to move, could not bear to be left behind, and therefore undertook a journey which was too severe for them. But such men usually are ready for service after a few days' rest.

There are but few persons who come into our hands affected with contagious or infectious disorders, or threatened with protracted sickness of the severer types of disease; but when any such arrive they are immediately



placed under the better care which they receive at the general hospitals.

There is one other point which, although not strictly connected with sanitary affairs, seems to me worthy of mention. Among these thousand and more of sick men whom we have had in charge, I have met scarcely one whose anxiety for renewed health did not seem actually to centre chiefly upon this idea, namely, to have strength enough to fight for his country. Hundreds of those men go home with a feeling of bitter disappointment, to think that they can never strike that blow in their country's cause for which their arm and heart both were once so strong, while now the arm is palsied. I am more and more impressed not merely with the patience of these men, but with their deep-seated spirit of patriotism. I am convinced that many persons in the community attribute to a mere love of excitement and to the attractiveness of a military life what ought to be credited to a genuine, earnest purpose. I have had peculiar opportunity here to get at the real feelings of a great many of these men, and I see more and more how strong and real a current of life flows down southward from our northern hills. Again and again have I wished that all doubting or lukewarm patriots could witness some of these scenes, which, to my eye, have so much real pathos in them—men returning to their friends and their homes simply to die, yet without a complaint or regret, except that they were too weak to bear arms. Even those men who were prisoners at Richmond, but who have now been allowed to return, (as they are maimed for life, nearly every one having lost a limb,) even these men utter no complaints. There have been ten of them with us the past two weeks, getting their papers of

discharge and of pension, yet I have not heard a murmur from one. It has seemed to me right, in my report, to give this measure of testimony.

I will append to this report one letter of many, which, although addressed to me personally, belongs to the Commission and to the public, whose charities I am allowed to bestow. The letter is printed just as it was received :

Sept the 29--61

DEAR SIR, on account of a feeling of gratitud towards you I sit down to write a few lines to you—to let you know that my Son arived home on the 24th in verry feeble health, about the same as when he left your House—& stil remains as week with verry bad Cough—when I herd him tel of the kind treatment he receaved from you an entire Stranger and the kindness you Showd him, and the things you gave him—I could not refrain from Sheding tears of Gratitude I feel as though he found a friend in need which is a friend in deed

I feel as though Heaven would Reward you for your kindness—it would be a pleasure to me to See Such a good Soul—as it is not money you was after I beg you to accept our cincere thanks and may God bless you—if we never meet on Earth may God prepair me to meet you in Heaven

Yours truly this from your obedient Servant

---

P S my son will write you Soon if able Excuse my poor ignorant letter