The convention of Geneva and the care of sick and wounded in war / by J. Furley.

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The Right Hon. VISCOUNT KNUTSFORD, G.C.M.G.,
in the Chair.

THE CONVENTION OF GENEVA AND THE CARE OF SICK AND WOUNDED IN WAR.

By J. FURLEY, Esq.

THE Convention of Geneva was drawn up in 1864; within six months it was signed on behalf of eight European States, including Great Britain, and at the present time it has been accepted by thirty-six Governments.

A red cross on a white ground was adopted as the badge of neutrality, and since 1864, thirty-seven national Red Cross Societies have been formed, each with an independent national existence, but with one international object, namely, the amelioration of the position of sick and wounded soldiers in war.

It is popularly supposed that the purpose of the convention was to establish Red Cross Societies; this is an error; the treaty makes no mention of such societies; but it is true that by taking voluntary aid to the victims of war under its protection, it suggested the formation of Red Cross Societies.

After an experience of thirty-two years, it might be imagined that there was nothing new to be said on this subject, and that, especially in every country possessing a Red Cross Society, the meaning of the badge would be thoroughly understood; but this is far from being the case. On the Continent of Europe, where national jealousy, fostered by commercial rivalry and stimulated and encouraged by continuous and ostentatious preparations for war, is always on the alert, it is perhaps natural that the effects of past wars should not be forgotten or ignored; but it is quite otherwise in our island home. We trust to the Government of the day to keep the country prepared for war; but we have no conscription to affect every family and business establishment, and military preparations are on a smaller scale and less conspicuous. Centuries have elapsed since our shores were invaded, and from the time of the Crimean war, although we have never been free from little wars and expeditions in remote parts of the world, not one has occurred to strain to the utmost the moral and physical resources of the nation, or to bring it into immediate touch with the complicated horrors of invasion.

Twenty-six years ago, a great war between neighbouring Powers roused England from its apathy, and the deepest sympathies of all classes of the community were manifested by the efforts made to do something towards the alleviation of the sufferings of those who were being mown down by thousands on the field of battle, as well as for the benefit of the countless victims represented by the widows and orphans and the owners of devastated fields. Then it was realised how, notwithstanding national prejudices kept alive by irresponsible writers and selfish speculators, civilisation has succeeded in forging links between nations, which, though powerless at present to make war an impossibility, are sufficient to compel those engaged in it to look upon the wounded foe as no longer an enemy, and to treat the victims of war as worthy of the greatest consideration and compassion. Every country in the civilised world joined in this great mission of mercy, and never before was the brotherhood of nations so apparently at the point of realisation: but more than a quarter of a century has passed away, and we now seem as far as ever from this desired consummation. Wars have not ceased, nor is it likely they will do so, judging from the annually increasing growth of armies, the expenditure on behalf of fleets, and the general uneasiness which prevails.

I have thus only lightly touched on questions which are being daily treated by speakers and writers whose qualifications are far beyond those to which I make any pretension; but as one who has had a considerable experience of the terrible and wide-spreading effects of war, and who recognises that these are more equally divided than is generally supposed between the vanquished and the victors, I am anxious to bring before civilians one of the responsibilities incumbent on them, and thus, perhaps indirectly, to influence the military authorities by convincing them that it is a subject in which they are immediately concerned. A civilian's participation in the defence of his country does not cease with his pecuniary contribution towards the Army and Navy; there is something more than this required of him.

It is not a popular thing to suggest that a foreign foe may some day effect a landing on our shores; nevertheless, this is a subject which military men have to consider as a serious possibility; it is, therefore, no less incumbent on the civilian to be prepared for such an eventuality. Any amount of care and forethought shown in this direction will do

nothing to encourage war, but should an invasion take place, it would undoubtedly lessen many of the attendant horrors, whether the enemy succeeded in advancing or were driven back from our shores.

This paper must, however, be confined to one phase only of war, namely, the means at our disposal for the care of the sick and wounded in war. Great as is the ignorance which prevails, no one with any knowledge of this matter would, I think, be found to assert that these means could be entirely provided by the Navy and Army Medical Departments. For these two eminent branches of our military services I have the very greatest respect, founded on a personal knowledge of many years, and an experience which enables me to assert that, although their members may be classed among the non-combatants, they have never been found to shelter themselves under this appellation when a deed of mercy or courage has called for a display of the grandest military qualities. Does not the roll of the Victoria Cross prove this by the percentage it shows of medical officers?

It is only natural that military authorities should bestow more attention on all the means which may contribute to the gaining of victories over their enemies, rather than engage in the uncongenial task of worrying a Chancellor of the Exchequer by proposing additions to the Estimates under the head of field-hospitals. It is one of the difficulties created by our insular position that we cannot regard the prospect of war in the same comprehensive manner as our Continental neighbours, and, therefore, it is that on this one important subject, the treatment of the sick and wounded in war, we are slow in following the examples we have before us in the great armies of Europe.

I would that I had the pen of the able writer of "The Battle of Dorking;" not that I might describe the confusion which would be caused by a hostile landing and a march on London; but rather that I might indicate the absence of confusion in everything concerning the sick and wounded, which would be the result of previous preparation and a strict adherence to the Convention of Geneva.

This treaty is one of the most remarkable facts of modern times; it is brief and simple, and it should be an obligatory subject in the instruction of every man who serves in the Army. I would go a step further, and say that it would prove a far more useful item of instruction than many of those included in the programme of our Board Schools, and not the less so that its meaning could be made quite intelligible in the course of a single hour.

It cannot be too generally known that when a country is in the occupation of a foreign foe, a knowledge of the Convention of Geneva is quite as important to the native civilians as it is to soldiers of the invading army. Since 1864, as I have already remarked, many Red Cross Societies have been formed, and, as may well be imagined, they have passed through many vicissitudes. In 1870, when the Franco-German War broke out, a very confused idea prevailed as to the meaning of the Red Cross badge, and many mistakes were made; nevertheless, so much good resulted from its use as a neutral sign for the protection of sick and wounded soldiers, and also of those who had charge of them and the buildings in which they were lodged, that no proposal has ever been seriously made for the abrogation of the Geneva Treaty. That the badge was undoubtedly abused cannot be denied, but this only proved the necessity of making a knowledge of the powers conferred by the treaty universally known, and also placing some restriction on the assumed rights of "benevolent neutrals."

In those days the general impression seemed to be that any man or woman wearing a white armlet with a red cross upon it was free to go pretty much where he or she thought fit, with a proud contempt of such things as military passes. A large proportion of these armlets were home-made, and had not even the official stamp of any military authority in either of the belligerent armies. Then, again, Red Cross flags of various forms and sizes were hung over innumerable houses, whether the roofs sheltered wounded men or not. This matter was rectified by an order that no such flag would be recognised unless there were a certain number of beds in the house actually occupied by invalids.

No badge has ever been more generally abused, both in peace and war, than the Red Cross, and unfortunately it has not been made a penal offence to use this distinctive emblem without legal authority, although in time of war any persons so wearing it would soon find themselves in a very unpleasant position. This ignorance has led to the use of the Red Cross badge as the recognised mark of a hospital or house of a private nurse, and various societies have adoped it, to say nothing of vendors of patent foods and medicines.

It cannot be too strongly insisted that the Red Cross is a military and not a civil badge, and, from a military point of view, no person is authorised to use it without official authority. The Army Medical Corps is, or ought to be, in exactly the same position in this respect as a civil

ambulance corps. On the outbreak of a war in which we might be engaged with other Powers, signatories of the Convention of Geneva, either as allies or adversaries, every officer and man engaged in hospital work would have served out to him a white armlet with a red cross, authenticated with the proper official stamp. These armlets form part of the uniform on active service, and have to be returned into store at the end of a campaign.

The little Red Cross badge worn on the right arm of the non-commissioned officers and men of the Army Hospital Corps has no more significance outside the British Army than any other regimental badge. I venture to think it was an unfortunate mistake when this badge was adopted.

We have a good example of the fact that the little red cross as now worn by the non-commissioned officers and men of the Army Hospital Service is only a corps badge, and not an equivalent to the Red Cross armlet with an official stamp : and it makes little difference to my contention that I cite a case which occurred when the Convention of Geneva not having been adopted by both belligerents, the Red Cross could not be acknowledged as a badge of neutrality. On the recent march of British troops to Kumassi, each man in the bearer companies of the Army Medical Corps carried a rifle and seventy-five rounds of ammunition. Although we were then opposed to savages, it was unfortunate that the Red Cross should have been displayed in any form.

I may also refer to another case where ignorance on the subject was also shown. Some of the members of the St. John's Ambulance Association recently went from the Cape to Krugersdorp, having volunteered their services, which were accepted by the Boers. A complaint has since been made that an armed Boer had a red cross on his arm. As the Transvaal Government had not adopted the Convention of Geneva, and neither side had received official sanction to wear the badge, any irregularity in regard to its use was possible, and there could be no legitimate ground for complaining that the Convention had been violated on one side or the other.

I mention these two facts in order to strengthen my argument that the Convention of Geneva ought to be more widely known, especially in those countries where, as in our own, it has been adopted by the Government.

Great Britain having accepted and signed the Convention of Geneva cannot ignore these details.

To be of any protection as a neutral badge, it is absolutely essential that the Red Cross should be equally respected by soldiers as well as civilians. For this reason, that part of an army which the Convention of Geneva was designed to make neutral should, under all circumstances, strictly observe the conditions imposed on it by this treaty. For instance, wagons used for carrying ammunition and other warlike stores to the front during a battle will not be treated as neutral if also employed in taking wounded men to the rear, even though each vehicle may bear a Red Cross flag. The more distinctive in appearance the transport vehicles of a hospital corps can be made, whether military or civilian, the better. It must not be thought, however, that in these days of long-range firing, the field hospital or the hospital transport can be entirely exempt from stray shots. Even a field hospital may be found in the thick of a fight. All that can be done is to select such places for dressing stations and field hospitals as may seem to be fairly secure, and in no case must troops be allowed to use a hospital as a mask for offensive operations.

I need not remind you that I am not a military man, and I am only referring to matters which have come within my personal experience.

Probably one of the most recent examples of attempting to improvise a Red Cross Society, and to place it in the field during a campaign, in which only one of the belligerents had accepted and acted on the Convention of Geneva, was afforded during the recent war between China and Japan.

With regard to this episode, I am allowed to give as my au'' :y an interesting letter written by Surgeon-General Taylor, A.M.S. [illegible] was attached to the Headquarters of Marshal Oyama, Commander of the Imperial Japanese Army.

On the 30th November, 1894, a Chinese steamer, the "Toonan," was captured by the Japanese Fleet just inside Port Arthur. She was found to have on board nine gentlemen respectively belonging to three nationalities, namely, Great Britain, the United States of America, and Denmark. On being asked what they wanted at Port Arthur, they presented a letter for the Officer Commanding the Japanese Army, stating that they represented the Tientsin Independent Red Cross Society, and had been sent out to give aid to the Chinese wounded.

The following is the verbatim reply of Marshal Oyama :—

"Gentlemen, I appreciate the humane object of your voyage to carry

wounded soldiers to Tientsin to be taken care of by your society. At the same time, I beg leave to call your attention to the plain fact that the wounded enemy soldiers, however humanely they be treated by the army in whose hands they are, are, after all, prisoners of war, so that the carrying of them from a land occupied by one of the belligerents cannot be called a neutral act. For this reason I am sorry to have to reject your offer. Let this denial, however, be joined with the assurance that it is the rule of our army to take care of the wounded soldiers, without distinction of enemy or not enemy, so that the wounded Chinese soldiers are being actually taken care of in our field hospitals, and I ask the gentlemen to have no anxiety about the matter.

"Please to understand that communication has been made to the commander of our fleet that the steamer "Toonan," on which you now are, shall be made to leave the waters about Risjan Peninsula before 6 p.m., 30th November. (Signed) OYAMA,

Commander of the Imperial Japanese Army."

I venture to think that this letter leaves nothing to be desired either in form or spirit, and it is an excellent illustration of the manner in which the Convention of Geneva has been adopted and is understood in Japan.

Such a benevolent expedition as the one just mentioned might, perhaps, have succeeded in passing in 1870, but "independent" neutrals will not in future be allowed to float the Red Cross flag in this manner, more especially if they do not possess official sanction from either of the belligerents and can only plead the best intentions.

The fact that this expedition was made in Chinese waters, to a port that had just been captured by the Japanese, suggests an allusion to the great difficulty that has hitherto prevented Red Cross arrangements possible in armies from being extended to naval warfare. A hospital ship flying the Red Cross, and anchored at a point where it could not interfere with the enemy's movements either on sea or land, would doubtless be treated as neutral by the naval and military forces of any State that had accepted the Convention of Geneva. One of the insuperable objections is, that such a vessel could not be allowed to enter a port belonging to either of the belligerents for the purpose of landing or embarking invalids of the fleet, if the enemy were able to prevent it.

I have mentioned the Franco-German War as the first campaign in which the effect of the Convention of Geneva was experienced on a large scale. The way in which each of the National Red Cross Societies then worked reminded one of the manner in which our Volunteer Army was gradually developed. Each corps acted very much on rules of its own, which were gradually modified to suit the requirements of the military chiefs under whom they happened to be working. Some were amenable to discipline, others were not, but as all had the same object, and the field was a very big one, considerable latitude was allowed.

Since that period the military Powers, especially France, Germany, Italy, and Russia have done much to organise the Volunteer Red Cross Societies, and to bring them into harmony with their respective armies. In no future war will such freedom be allowed as was witnessed in 1870-71, and it is even doubtful if the services of neutrals from States, other than belligerents, will be allowed to intervene; or, if permitted to do so, they will have to serve under the orders of the chief of that army to which they may be attached.

About thirty-seven National Red Cross Societies have been formed since 1864. I would here draw attention to the rule laid down by the International Committee at Geneva that only one Red Cross Society is recognised for each country, colonies included, as any departure from this regulation would lead to serious complications.

Time will not permit me to describe the manner in which each of these central societies has been developed; a detailed account of the organisation and work performed by them all would fill many volumes. Soon after the first establishment of these Societies, it was admitted that, to keep the work up to the level of the requirements of war, it would be necessary to practise and prepare in time of peace; most of the Societies have, therefore, undertaken to train men and women for that large field of usefulness which is to be found in the accidents, epidemics, and disasters of all kinds in civil life.

It is unnecessary for me to describe here the very great part taken in 1870-71 by the British National Aid Society (which is our National Red Cross Society), and also the assistance it has afforded on other occasions when the British Army has been engaged. Nor is it necessary to describe what the St. John's Ambulance Association has done. Combine the objects of these two institutions, and you have what the great military States of Europe are striving to obtain—an inexhaustible supply of men and women daily engaged in the alleviation of pain and suffering, from which at short notice, a well-trained, useful, and intelligent supplement can be formed for the Army Hospital service.

I hope I shall not be accused of undue self-assertion if I mention the success which has attended one step that has been taken in England towards realising this desire to train and organise a body of men and women who could be relied on, in case of necessity, to act as a reserve to the Army Hospital Corps, and who, meanwhile, are daily employed in ministering to the relief of the sick and wounded in time of peace. I refer to the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, of which I formed the nucleus when I had the honour to be Director of the Ambulance Department of the Order of St. John, and which is surely, if slowly, developing into a very useful body. We had at hand a large number of men who had been instructed in First Aid ; but something more was required, even for peace time, to give cohesion and stability to this excellent *personnel*. Several corps were therefore formed in different parts of England; and I have no hesitation in saying that this organisation can be readily extended, especially if favoured by official support. Some of these corps have been inspected by the present Director-General of the Army Medical Department and other officers appointed by him, and their reports are in the highest degree satisfactory and encouraging. I may also mention the review of the Tibshelf and Birchwood Colliery Ambulance Corps by Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor, a gracious act which will never fade from the memory of those who were privileged to take part in it.

If, as yet, I have said little with regard to female nurses, it is because they form a subject which comes rather within the province of others who are more competent than myself to speak on it, and because their training for peace, as well as for war, must be more complete and extensive than in the case of the majority of the men to whom I have just referred. First-aid nurses who have been instructed and enrolled by the St. John's Ambulance Association are doing admirable service, especially in some of the colliery districts, as many surgeons will testify, but for real hospital work only a long course of training and experience, extending over two or three years, is sufficient to bring them up to a safe and proper standard of efficiency.

In the direction thus indicated I am, perhaps, an enthusiast, some may call me a fanatic ; but for this object—the organisation of civilians in time of peace as a strong ambulance supplement for time of war—I have striven for nearly thirty years, and I never felt more sanguine of its realisation than I do to-day. I should like to mention the names of colleagues and friends of different nationalities with whom I have been associated, and from whom I have received the best advice and the greatest encouragement; but I fear I might omit some by inadvertence and compromise others by my zeal. One, however, I may recall without hesitation, whose loss we are still mourning, and who was regarded with affectionate esteem by his friends and associates in this country and throughout the civilised world for his amiable qualities, professional ability, and exhaustive knowledge in all that pertains to military hospitals and ambulances and the Convention of Geneva, of which he was one of the authors. The name of Longmore is written large on every page which treats of these subjects from the time of the Crimean War to the present date ; and this name, modest and unassuming as was the man who bore it, will always beheld in respect and admiration wherever the victims ofwar are deemed worthy of the highest efforts of humanity.

It would serve little purpose to occupy more time in describing what has been done in the past, unless it can be shown how this country can make use of and improve on the experience which has been acquired. Each National Red Cross Society has been organised and developed on lines best adapted to its own conditions and circumstances. For reasons already slightly sketched, the Red Cross idea has not made the progress in this country observable elsewhere. I do not propose to mention in detail all that these different societies have accomplished in peace and war, but will limit myself to the statement that Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, offer examples of certain portions of Red Cross work which might be followed with advantage in this country. But it is in France will be found the model best suited to the actual position of affairs at which we have arrived in regard to first-aid iustruction, trained nurses, and civil ambulance material. In the organisation of these means for war purposes, we are at present far behind all the States just mentioned ; but, if only we can arrive at a proper understanding, we shall be soon found ahead of them all in everything needed as a Supplemental Reserve to the Army Medical Service. It must not, however, be thought that this bold assertion refers to quantity and not to quality, but it means that out of the superabundant quantity now existing, a sufficient nucleus of most excellent quality can be obtained.

The French Red Cross Society, established in 1864, was founded on lines very different to those which it now follows, and its whole system was completely modified by the sad experiences of 1870-71. Nor has it been wholly independent of political influences and changes of Government. Be this as it may, the outcome, considered as a model of good organisation, is most satisfactory.

This society is now divided into three separate bodies, each keeping its own name and having its own rules in time of peace, but all of them controlled by the Minister of War. *La Société de Secours aux blessés des Armées de terre et de mer*, the original French Red Cross Society, was established in 1864. In 1884, a decree was passed with the object of bringing the society into harmony with the military changes that had taken place since the war of 1870-71, and authorising it to supplement in time of war the military sanitary service, to distribute gifts offered by public generosity, to establish hospitals in places that may be indicated as requiring them, to render assistance in the transport of sick and wounded soldiers, in the railway station infirmaries (a creation of the Franco-German War), and in all the auxiliary hospitals at the seat of war. Since this decree of 1884, two others have been passed, dated respectively 16th November, 1886, and 21st December of the same year. The first recognises *l'Association des dames françaises*, and the second, *l'Union des femmes de France*. These decrees limit the co-operation of the above-named aid-societies with the military medical service to the rear of active hostilities and to the national territory.

Irrespective of this assistance, the three societies are authorised to distribute to the sick and wounded any gifts they may collect. The relations of the three societies with each other and with the official directors of the medical service are defined by the above decrees. Every establishment of the aid-societies is under the surveillance of the principal medical officer of the district in which it is situated, who also superintends all the documents and registers prescribed.

The *personnel* of the three societies is authorised to wear a uniform and the badges approved by the Minister of War. All associations in France, which more or less pursue the same object and which cannot be recognised as independent societies, are required in time of war to become merged in the *Société de Secours aux blessés des Armés de terre et de mer*; there is only one exception to this rule, and that is in favour of those strictly local ambulances whose action does not extend beyond the communes where they are established.

Already at many of the most important railway junctions on the principal lines between Paris and the frontier, not only have certain rooms been apportioned for the use of the Red Cross Society, but a large *personnel* and everything required for hospital use have been allotted for the same purpose. On the outbreak of war each of these temporary hospitals could be placed on an active footing as rapidly as the mobilisation of the army can be effected; and besides, the delegates of the society are charged with the useful duty of bringing back invalids from the front and accompanying the railway ambulance trains. These moveable and stationary hospitals form the special work of the *Société de secours aux blessés militaires* in time of war, and they offer a large scope for the exercise of national philanthropy without the danger and inconvenience to which reference has already been made.

Great attention is being paid by the French society (for I prefer to consider the three societies as one association) to the constant improvement of ambulance material: depôts have been established in thirty-nine towns corresponding with thirty-nine territorial divisions of the army, and trials of this material are annually made at the period of the great manœuvres. For the *personnel*, schools of instruction for ambulances and nurses have been formed in Paris, and also at Marseilles, Lille, and Nancy.[1]

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[1] The above brief description of the organisation of the French Red Cross Society is taken from the chapter on "the Convention of Geneva and its badge, the Red Cross, written by J. F., and published in the second edition of Longmore's "Manual of Ambulance Transport."

If I have dwelt at some length on the system adopted for making the Voluntary Aid Societies in France a reliable supplement to the Medical Department of the Army, it is because such an organisation seems to be the one best adapted to English needs. It cannot be too often repeated, that no official means for treating the sick and wounded can be adequate to the exigencies of a great campaign. The medical corps of every large army must have a volunteer reserve for great emergencies. If this were so in the past, and we know it was the case, how much greater will be the strain on the Army Medical Service in the future. Even during the last twenty-five years what a change has taken place! Henceforth wars will break out with little or no notice, and though they may be of less duration than the campaigns and sieges of the past, the number of killed and wounded will be greater in proportion to the time. Improved small arms, long-range artillery, and quick-firing machine-guns will make it impossible to establish dressing stations in close proximity to the firing line, or to carry off the wounded during the progress of a battle. So much the greater, then, will be the need of an

increase in the hospital corps as well as in the means of ambulance transport. The whole available strength of the Army Hospital Corps will have to be as near the front as possible, and the care of the sick and wounded on the lines of communication and in the base hospitals must be left to others. If this reserve be not carefully and systematically organised in time of peace, it will be a cause of trouble and vexation to the authorities at the critical moment, the *personnel* will prove insufficient and undisciplined, gifts of stores will be doubtful in quality and superabundant in quantity, and the ordinary civil hospitals will suffer in proportion, by loss in their staff and by a wasteful expenditure of good material.

In 1892 I had the honour to read a paper in this Institution on "Ambulance Work and Material in Peace and War." On that occasion, I spoke of the improvements which had been made in stretchers, and added some suggestions which I considered, if carried out, might be to the advantage of those wounded in battle. My friend, Mr. Archibald Forbes, criticised in a playful manner my interest in military stretchers, and qualified as a waste of time thoughts devoted to the subject of stretchers for the battle-fields of the future. The same able writer, in his very interesting volume entitled "Memories and Studies of War and Peace," again returns to this subject. He has done this in a manner so friendly to myself personally, that I am encouraged to ask him and those who agree with him, to give the matter a little further consideration. The military stretcher must remain the most important of all means of transport for sick and wounded men. Admitting the state of things, so forcibly and graphically described by Mr. Forbes, that will exist in the future after a great battle, in consequence of the immense number of wounded which the altered conditions of military armaments and new methods of fighting will concentrate in exposed parts of the field in an incredibly short space of time, is there any reason why we should refrain from all attempts to do the uttermost in our power to remove the wounded to dressing stations and hospitals the moment that a cessation from the anticipated hail of projectiles may render such service possible? If the means of transporting the wounded from the field of a great battle are at present insufficient, that Government, which might neglect to make the Hospital Corps in some degree adequate to the requirements of its army, would, indeed, incur a most serious responsibility.

Mr. Forbes has quoted, in support of his views, the late Professor Billroth and Surgeon-General von Bardeleben; but I have read the published opinions of these two great surgeons in a manner quite different, and I personally knew them well enough, to feel assured that they would have neglected no means of clearing a battle-field of wounded men the very moment it might be possible to do so.

In 1892, at the International Conference of Red Cross Societies, held at Rome, a communication made by Sir Thomas Longore was read in support of the views expressed by Professor Billroth, and this concluded as follows:—"Everything thus tends to show that while the number of sufferers urgently requiring help will be vastly increased in future wars, the means of affording them shelter and surgical attention will be pushed back to a greater distance than has ever before been necessary. If a battle is fought on a very large scale, the number of wounded men most pitifully demanding aid will be so vast that obviously the arrangements made to meet the wants of the probable number of wounded under former circumstances will be quite inadequate to meet future needs. The question then arises, whether the system of volunteer help to the wounded by neutrals, which was, in fact, accepted by both the French and Germans during the war of 1870-71, and in principle is admitted under certain restrictions in the official regulations of most countries, should not be more largely developed, in order to meet the necessities of the wounded, in case, unhappily, hostilities on a large scale should again arise in Europe."

In a speech made by Surgeon-General von Coler to an assembly of delegates of the German Red Cross Societies, the distinguished head of the Prussian Army Medical Department made the following remarks:—"It is now universally admitted that the great task imposed on the Sanitary Corps, on the outbreak of war, cannot be accomplished without the help of voluntary assistance. This aid should go hand-in-hand with the official services; they should be constituted on the same principle and based on one solid organisation; they should unite their efforts in order to be able to perform all their duties. It must not be forgotten that with the torrents of troops one country can now pour upon another in the space of a few days, armed with the present highly perfected and terribly destructive weapons, an immense task would be instantaneously set before the Sanitary Corps, and one with which it would be impossible for them to cope, unless everything were ready beforehand for such a sudden and awful eventuality. Unity of direction in war, unity of direction in peace, that is what we need. In the same way as the Army is sub-divided in fractions of varied importance subordinated one to the other, so voluntary aid ought to be hierarchically divided, under one absolute control, whence

should issue all orders and all decisions, which should also designate for each function to be fulfilled the most capable man, whose duty, even in time of peace, should be to make himself familiar with the work which would devolve upon him in time of war.

Much has already been done in this direction, in forming an instructed and exercised *personnel;* and yet the practical side, that is, the nursing of the sick, ought to be much further developed. The transport of the wounded from the hospital stations on the lines of communication, from the temporary hospitals to the railway trains; then, again, intelligent activity within the hospitals, more especially require education and prolonged and attentive instruction. Many hospitals have opened their doors and allowed such practical work and training, and the result has been a great public gain for time of peace, as good nurses often succeed in preventing an epidemic from becoming more deadly than a war.

On the other hand, in what relates to material, a department in which it is equally necessary to be prepared beforehand, as far as it is humanly possible, the efforts of Red Cross Societies should be directed to the acquisition and perfecting of portable hospitals destined to supply the needs and unhealthiness of particular localities; and, as is the case with the *personnel*, these moveable barracks can be of the greatest use even in peace time."

I have quoted Dr. von Coler at some length, because he is an authority whose words will carry as much weight here as in his own country.

Do we possess in England the means, *personnel* and *matériel*, out of which such an effective supplement to the Army Hospital Corps can be formed? This question may be unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative. We possess it in a degree that has never been attained in any other country, much as we can learn from other countries in regard to its organisation and extension to the requirements of war.

Leaving out the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, which has its own defined duties to perform, there are two institutions which I have already named. These are the St. John's Ambulance Association and the British National Aid or Red Cross Society.

Besides these, there is another most valuable and indeed indispensable element to be found in the existing organisations of female nurses. We all know the valuable patronage and practical assistance given to the British National Aid Society by the Princess of Wales during the last Egyptian Campaign, and the great interest taken by Her Royal Highness in everything that concerns the selection, training, and general welfare of female nurses. We also know, from the evidence of official records, that it has long been the aim and desire of the Princess Christian to form a national reserve of highly-trained nurses for the Army Hospitals; and in this Her Royal Highness has already in a great measure succeeded, through negotiations entered into with several of the large hospitals of the metropolis. Such a project, if fully carried out and sanctioned by the authorities, would provide a reserve of experienced nurses which would be available at short notice as an efficient auxiliary of the Army and Navy Medical Services.

It would be out of place on this occasion, and presumptuous on my part, to submit any scheme by which these three bodies, so distinct and independent in time of peace, could be organised for the work that has been indicated for time of war; but I may claim that for twenty-five years I have advocated such an amalgamation, and having carefully watched the working of Red Cross Societies in France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, I have satisfied myself that the combination is possible, practicable, and desirable. It need disturb no programme laid down for peace time, but, on the contrary, it would stimulate to further efforts, by proving that on the broad field of humanity we can labour both in peace and war; and that in preparing ourselves to meet the accidents and epidemics of civil life, we are, at the same time, forming a valuable reserve, both in *personnel* and *matériel*, to the official means which exist for alleviating the sufferings of our sick and wounded soldiers and sailors in time of pressing national need.

Briefly summed up, our aim should be:—

a. A more general appreciation of the Convention of Geneva, which was signed and adopted by this country more than a quarter of a century ago, then pigeon-holed at the Foreign Office, and which has since remained almost a dead letter

b The recognition of the Red Cross as a military badge of neutrality, the abuse of which in time of war inevitably entails certain serious penalties, and which, therefore, in time of peace should be carefully protected.

c. The organisation of a powerful Red Cross Society, to be formed from the institutions already indicated, acting within their present limits in time of peace, but entirely under military control for all war purposes.