



ORANGE STATION CAMP.

PART OF THE BILL.

THE PATHETIC SIDE OF WAR.

We have all been busy cheering Tommy off to the war, says a writer in the "Daily News," and now we are giving attention to those near and dear to him whom he has left behind. You see it is so very easy to shout encouragement to the fellows who are going to fight for you. Behind all the glamour of the departing transports lie almost countless little human tragedies. The tears and sobs, and clinging embraces upon the quays are sad enough in all conscience. Even they, for a moment, make us vividly conscious of the terrible realities of war. But then these piteous scenes of heart-breaking good-byes are modified by the bright and stirring strains of the bands, and the enthusiasm of the cheering crowds. They, therefore, are incapable of bringing home to us in all their nakedness the dread realities of war, as they work themselves out, in the daily round of feverish anxieties, silent prayers, and dumb sorrows of thousands of little homes. It is in these places where the real tragedies of the war are to be found; it is in this direction towards which the generous hand of the nation should be extended.

Many employers have shown the sincerity of their patriotism by making some provision for the dependants of their workmen who have been recalled to the colours. Some have done nothing. In other cases the "Reserve" men have been engaged in casual employment, where no provision has been made. During the past week I have called at the homes of several reservists. Let me tell you a bit of what I have seen and heard, only suppressing real names.

Mrs Nicholls is a bright-faced old lady of somewhere about seventy, living in one of the dingy little streets

of South Bromley, not far from the gasworks. If she were as lively upon her feet and with her hands as she is in her smiles and conversation she would be reckoned a woman in the prime of life. Such, however, is not her luck. She has had to lead a hard life, for up to the time of his death, eighteen years ago, her husband was merely a gas-stoker. When he was

manent victim to rheumatism. Rheumatism is really such a very common acquisition down in East London that it seems quite needless to mention so simple a matter. Nor should I mention it but for the further fact that it prevents Mrs Nicholls earning a living for herself while her two sons are away "at the war." You see, that is just what I was coming to. Mrs Nicholls has two sons. One is married, and has two children. Still, he has helped the old lady. The other is not married, and helped her still more. The first is a stevedore, and lived in a neighbouring street, allowing the old lady what he could afford each week. It was usually half-a-crown or three shillings. The other has worked as a docker, and lived with his mother, the old lady sleeping in the bedroom, and Jem utilising the "parlour," the two rooms being the extent of their residence. The old lady has now got one room, and has fears even of being compelled to give this up, and to go to the workhouse, for there is no allowance from the employer of either of the sons. The patriotism of which we have heard does not appear to run to the length of casual labourers. Dockers and stevedores are mostly casual. Mrs Nicholls talks much and pathetically of the war.

"You see, sir," she said, "they both went off from Southampton. I wanted very much to see 'em off, but money wouldn't run to it, and, besides, you see, sir, it might 'a bin a bit orkit me

In fact, Bill's time would 'a been up by Christmas. You see, their father and their Uncle Tom had both been in the Army. Their father saw somethin' of the Crimea, and was always a-talkin' to the boys about the Roushans, and I expect that's what made 'em both want to go into the army; but Jem wouldn't a gone into the army only he got out of work, and couldn't get nothin' to do, and the next I 'eard was a letter from him, sayin' as 'ow 'e 'ad gone into the army."

"I suppose you were very much surprised when you heard that your two sons were recalled to the colours?"

"No, it looked like comin' for some days, but when it comed it nigh knocked us all of a 'eap. 'O' course, I said, 'Ard luck boys, but you must go for Queen and country, and very likely your old mother 'll be dead afore you get back. But never mind, boys, she's 'ad 'er time.' Then, o' course, they wants to know what'll become o' me, and Bill's wife and kiddies, cause what Bill's wife gets from the army while 'e's away ain't nothin' to speak of. So I ups and tells 'em not to bother about us, but to go and do their duty."

"Ousomever, between you and me, sir, it's a bit 'ard on the likes on us that there ain't no real pervision made like what there is for officers' people, although Bill said afore 'e went that the Government would raise some money to keep the likes on us from the workus. I ain't seen it yet, and o'



THE WOUNDED VOLUNTEERS IN HOSPITAL AT PIETERMARITZBURG.

alive she took in washing. When he died she still did laundry work. Domestic laundry work is usually paid for in cash and in kind. The cash has been absorbed in keeping the woff from the door. But Mrs Nicholls has been handsomely paid in kind. In other words, she has become a per-

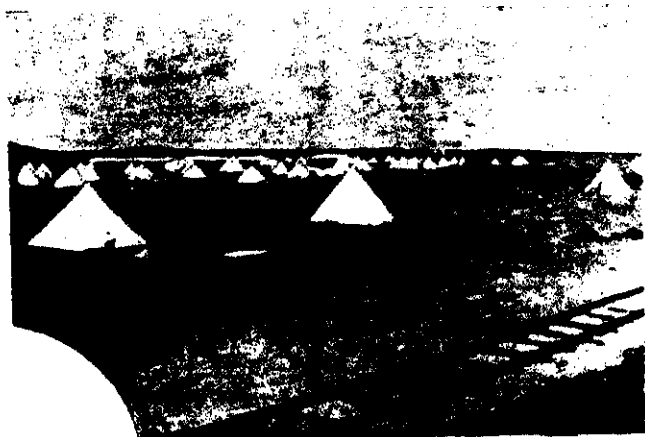
son getting back again, what with my roomatics and the crowd, and my not being used much to trains, and neither o' the boys able to come along back with me."

"And how long had they been in the Reserves?"

"Oh, Bill had been out of the reg'lars for close on five years, but Jem, 'e'd been at 'ome about four years.

course I've 'ad to go to Uncle's pretty much. What I says is, if the rich men wants the poor men to do the fighting for 'em, let 'em pay 'em well, and look arter their poor old mothers, and little uns while they're away gettin' killed and wounded."

I told Mrs Nicholls that I thought her views very reasonable, and slipped a coin into her hand.



INFANTRY CAMP AT DE AAR.

HOW THE INFANTRY ARE TAKEN TO AND FROM THE CAMP, ORANGE RIVER.
From "Black and White."