

**THE TRAGEDY AND
COMEDY OF WAR
HOSPITALS; PP. 1-184**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649723171

The Tragedy and Comedy of War Hospitals; pp. 1-184 by Sister X.

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Cover @ 2017

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SISTER X.

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PRETORIA BRIDGE

Frontpiece

THE TRAGEDY
AND COMEDY OF
WAR HOSPITALS

BY SISTER X.

UN

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

1906

9-13-41 5.7

2-7-44

Evans, Miss

TO

A. G.

WHOSE WIDE OUTLOOK, AND
NOBLE SELF-EFFACING ACTIONS,
IN OUR DAYS OF DIFFICULTY,
EXERCISED ON ALL AROUND
HER, AN ELEVATING AND
INSPIRING INFLUENCE

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PREFACE

THE letters contained in this volume do not propose to give up-to-date Blue-book accounts of events, but simply my own personal experience ; therefore, O ! R.A.M.C. reader, do not rise up in arms against this humble relater ! They were written in the midst of the scenes and occurrences which they describe, to friends at home, and retain their original form, as this affords greater freedom of composition than a series of chapters.

And thou, O ! critic, look not for dates, for I have given none.

These accounts are not meant to reveal the deficiencies of the Royal Army Medical Corps, but only *my own* actual experiences. We all see things differently, but this is how I saw them ! I am not judging, nor am I criticizing, I am merely recording events that occurred within my own range of vision. I received nothing but kindness at the hands of

the R.A.M.C., and can honestly say that, considering how they were hedged round by red tape, it is marvellous what they were able to achieve.

To be chained to a dead system is, in its way, just as unpleasant and insanitary as to live chained to a dead body, and this was practically their position. I can really only liken the system to the Vermiform Appendix, that in all probability would have done admirably in a prehistoric period—when we had tails—but not in our present state, when we have none. To carry on my simile, one thing that impressed me as odd was, that *all* the victims (*viz.* officials), although suffering acutely from the inconveniences of appendicitis, were not aware of the fact. They were, I may even say, blissfully unconscious of it; and perhaps, in the circumstances, it was just as well, as summary operations on the spot would have been more than disastrous and quite out of the question!

Such operations have taken place since the War, and great reforms are in progress in the R.A.M.C.; so that if I have laid some emphasis on their shortcomings, it is not with the intention to “show them up,” but to point out that the disease from which

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their system suffered was out-of-dateness, and not indifference or carelessness.

I hope it is unnecessary for me to assert that these accounts are perfectly true, and not imaginings of my brain. Would that some of them were!

SISTER X.

