CLIFFDEN, MURREE HILLS, AS A HOT WEATHER STATION FOR FAMILIES.

By Captain R. H. FURR, D.S.O.

Royal Army Medical Corps.

Cliffden barracks for soldiers' families lie on the wooded slopes of the Pindi Point spur of the Murree range of hills, some 6,040 feet above sea-level. They are arranged in blocks of five or six sets of rooms to one building, and are built on such level plots in near proximity as are available. A single set of rooms comprises a front living-room screened by a wooden partition about eight feet high from a bedroom, which has a bath-room of the ordinary Indian pattern annexed. A double set of rooms comprises two communicating single sets.

In 1904 some sixty-eight families were accommodated, and the camp population was sixty-eight women and 145 children, with a Camp Quartermaster-Sergeant, Schoolmaster, Provost Sergeant, and six soldiers for police duties.

The barracks are provided with a small number of stoves for such women as prefer to cook in their own quarters, and a kitchen built near at hand for every six or eight families who have native cooks. A post office, coffee shop, canteen, library, shoe-makers' and tailors' shops make the camp self-contained. There is also a good railed-in recreation ground.

The hospital comprises four blocks of buildings, namely, an isolation block, situated some 150 feet below the administrative building, and having near at hand a disinfecter and destructor. The administrative block consists of the Assistant Surgeon's quarters, a dispensary and office.

The main building is some thirty feet higher up the slope from the foregoing, and is arranged in one long room divided by doors into two eight-bedded wards connected with two accouchment rooms by a short covered passage, and also with a two-seated latrine.

The bath-room is close by, and the last block—the kitchen—is approached by a flight of steps, as the site is nearly as high as the hospital roof.

The accumulated necessaries and luxuries purchased from the "Garden Fund" have made the hospital exceedingly comfortable as regards furniture, curtains, &c.; and the soldiers' wives take full advantage of the medical treatment available. The stock of instruments and appliances has also been increased by private purchase, and in 1904 some eleven major operations were performed.
During the hot weather season of 1904 the admissions for women were forty-nine, giving a daily percentage of 0.25; and for children forty-seven, percentage 0.24. An average of four women and five children received advice and medicine at the dispensary daily.

Of infectious diseases, measles, German measles, mumps, whooping cough and ophthalmia occurred. The white population in India was only increased by seven boys and ten girls, and one woman and four children died.

The above daily rate of sick, many of whom suffered from "green diarrhoea," although in part due to the medical selection of delicate women and children for the privilege of occupying quarters in Clifffen, can also be referred to the following local causes:—

(1) *The Locality.*—A mountain-side, which, although densely wooded, and beautiful in every way, receives the surface drainage from the higher slopes.

(2) *The Conservancy System,* which is the usual dry-earth trench system, would, if carried out under rigid supervision, be undoubtedly above any condemnation. But as the excreta from the slopes above Clifffen, which are covered with isolated bungalows, has to be collected by natives in iron drums and conveyed to a wire-carrying station, and then sent down in large drums several hundred feet to the filth-trenches below, it is obvious that, given limited observation over the sweepers, and a convenient secluded spot, the native would hardly be human if he did not risk severe punishment and lighten his load by dumping it on the ground. In Clifffen the drums are collected twice daily and carried one and a half miles to the nearest trench, which is well away from the camp, and at a lower level. The sullage water from the kitchens is also so disposed of, but as a rough stone gutter conducts it from the kitchen sink to the drum much is spilled and the ground thereby fouled.

(3) *The Kitchens* are very small for the cooking for some six to eight families in each. To any one who has served in India the resulting condition needs no further description. The servants are paid privately by the families, and if made to keep their kitchens clean simply run away. It often happens that the sanitary zeal of the camp officials thus deprives a mother, with a fortnight-old baby and several other small children, of her only servant and help.

(4) *The Native Servants.*—There is only accommodation for the camp sweepers and "bhisties." It follows that the sixty or seventy private servants either live some distance away or sleep in any hole
or corner they can find. Natives do not seem to value such sanitary precautions as using a latrine, and so the surroundings of the camp are likely to be fouled.

By the foregoing it is evident that a good deal of dirt, which so favours many disorders, especially "green diarrhoea" of children, is present. Much has and is being done to remedy this, but more should be done as regards (3) and (4).

The first important supply in a families' barracks is undoubtedly a good pure milk. This has been secured to a certain extent by the monopoly of the supply by a Government dairy. Such a step, doing away with the dirty native contractor, is, of course, beneficial, but the writer would prefer to see such dairies worked and managed by white men. In Murree, the responsible head of the dairy is a gentleman who has also a large dairy in Rawal Pindi to supervise, and has to leave a Lance-Corporal of a British regiment to act for him in his frequent absences. The rest of his staff are almost entirely natives, and this allows of too much unsupervised native handling of the milk. Milk is so easily filled with micro-organisms, and "green diarrhoea" caused by such a supply so frequently fatal, that every possible or probable loophole for contamination should be closed. The water supply is excellent, and is a pipe supply from springs near Doonga Gali.

The Government rations are very good, and the local coffee shop has a very moderate tariff for excellent articles as luxuries and additions.

Although the regulation allotment of quarters seems to cause over-crowding in many cases, and hence renders the spread of infectious disease difficult to check, still the benefits derived from the open-air life in such a situation often builds up a store of health for the women and children.

The rains begin about the beginning or middle of July and last until about the end of September. There are many beautifully fine days intervening, however, and although this is the sickly season, the damp heat being very trying at times, still the children seem to thrive. Many a future soldier or useful citizen of the Empire is born in Cliffden, and many a pale, weary-looking woman or child owes the restoring of health to its existence as a barracks for families.

The month of October is keen and bracing, and sends us all back to the plains looking more like recent arrivals from home than dwellers in the East. Cliffden thus justifies its existence as a tiny factor in the upkeep of the health of the white people in India.