

Miss M. H. Cuthbert.
A.A.N.S.

16.

*Influenza in
Egypt in early years
1918 July?*

I embarked on the 6th September, 1917, on the "Runic". As our destination was Egypt, we were put off the ship at Durban, and here we had to wait five weeks for a boat bound for Egypt. We then embarked on the "Coronia" which however, only took us as far as Bombay. Here we transhipped to the "Saxon" and eventually reached Suez in November, and entrained from there to Cairo. I was loaned to four sisters to the British Hospital at Nasriah. They were all very good here, and received us very kindly, shewing us every consideration. It had been a large school converted into a Hospital, and was very well equipped, and excellently managed. After the Gaza stunt, the work was very heavy, the patients being very badly wounded. I was on night duty during this heavy work, as night superintendent. It was a most anxious time, as there were haemorrhages in different wards, nearly every night. Food was very plentiful and there were many concerts for the patients. We were very comfortably billeted in flats overlooking the Nile. I was here for six months, and was then transferred to the 31st General Hospital, Abbassia, which was a large barracks, admirably situated, and which lent itself excellently as a Hospital.

Here we were very busy indeed, having to open up many extra wards on account of the severity of the influenza epidemic. We even had to convert the chapel and the recreation room into wards, so great was the demand on the beds. Naturally we had very little time off duty. We worked under fairly good conditions but we were very under-staffed. A great number of the patients died of pneumonia following influenza. We were billeted in a house opposite the Hospital which was very comfortable, and we had a beautiful garden in which we could sit in the evening.

I stayed there for about four months, when I was detailed for duty in Salonica. I left Alexandria at the end of October, and reached Salonica after a seven days trip, not having sighted any submarines. We were convoyed by seven destroyers, but nothing happened. On landing at our destination, we were met by ambulances and taken to the 52nd General Hospital which had an R.A.M.C. male personnel, and an Aust. Nursing Staff. This combination of services worked very well. Here we worked under very good conditions, the wards being small and well equipped. The food was principally tinned, fresh foods being almost unprocurable. They had excellent concerts arranged by the staff. The weather conditions were most trying, the cold being intense, and we had very little heating apparatus. I remained at this Hospital until the end of February, 1918, when the Hospital was handed over to a British Unit. After furlough, in England, I was detailed for duty to No. 3 A.A.H., Dartford, where I am at present awaiting transport to Australia.
