

no clean clothes for weeks at a time but many entire outfits were lost and never recovered. Had it not been for the assistance given by the various relief agencies, nurses as well as patients would have found it hard to exist under military regulations. The work of all these relief associations, of which the branches of the Red Cross and the Woman's National War Relief were most prominent—to say nothing of the various State Associations, each looking after its own men—has been truly wonderful. The most lavish supplies of money have been contributed to them, and as lavishly expended. No time, trouble, or expense has been spared by them, and it would be difficult to conceive what the actual condition of our soldiers would have been without this outside help.

During all this strenuous period, nurses have had such an opportunity as has never been theirs before, in America, to make their record under the most difficult, and at the same time dramatic circumstances. On the whole, they have done a fine and successful piece of work; and have shown fortitude, heroism, devotion and admirable capacity. Many military officials of rank, formerly opposed to having women nurses in camp, have been converted since they have seen for themselves, how much they do for the comfort of the patients, the order, cleanliness and morale of the wards, and most of all, how great their gains are in the fight against disease and death.

Nevertheless, many criticisms have been directed against trained nurses, especially since the first great stress was over, and in spite of all that they have done the question of whether they should be established in military hospitals, is still answered in the negative by some men in authority. Candour compels one to admit that individual women, through personal failings, do so often give bad impressions, that they almost succeed in nullifying, in the minds of those about them, the good work done by a whole profession.

With eight hundred trained nurses on duty in camp hospitals, it is small wonder that there should be some who were no great credit to their schools or to themselves, and some of the criticisms made upon nurses in general were of no value; as that they complained, and were exacting and troublesome. This usually meant that they insisted upon having better conditions, and if they had not done so, they would have been of little value as nursing reformers, and might as well have stayed at home.

But more unanswerable and mortifying were the charges of frivolity, of unwomanly and undignified behaviour with men, of a tendency to flirtation and a silly susceptibility.

Not only were these charges sometimes justified by facts, but in several most painful instances nurses compromised themselves sufficiently to make them the subjects of even scandalous gossip and comment. Such faults, in a nurse pursuing her calling, are crimes, for they tend to discredit her whole profession, and to counteract the self-denying labors of a whole generation of high minded women.

This is not a pleasant theme, but it demands the serious consideration of nurses. Of what utmost importance is it that only the right kind of women should be chosen for such work, and how great is the need of constant self-government and self-discipline in our ranks! As for the enlisted men, but one opinion is held among them as to the desirability of having soldiers cared for by trained nurses. Not a man in the ranks, but is filled

with gratitude, admiration, and devotion for the "lady nurses." Their stories are all divided into two parts—"before the lady nurses came," and after. The first part is of untold misery and hardship—the second, of relief, gentle care, kind words; of bathing, clean clothes, refreshing food, and medicines given on time. "Those men nurses don't care nothing about us," they say. "When a man's sick he likes a woman to take care of him."

A Rough Rider from Arizona, when he got home again was going to "have more to tell about the women and what they did than about all the rest of the war." The volunteers being fresh from civil life were not so unaccustomed to the care of a woman, but to the regulars who have never had such an experience in all their Indian campaigning and army post life, it was a revelation, and their naïve astonishment and appreciation were both delightful and amusing. Military ways also come in for criticism from the nurses. Your correspondent is of the opinion, and she would like to know how far others with more experience agree with her—that military discipline does not equal the discipline of a good hospital. Military procedure, at least in America, seems to be designed for the purpose of *not* getting things done, and military duties seem to be elaborately planned for the purpose of making it appear that a great lot of men are very busy and deeply occupied, when in reality they are doing nothing, or next to nothing at all. The old question too of how far the nurse must carry loyalty to the doctor came up, when nurses with thorough hospital training and knowledge of the methods of the best physicians, found themselves under orders of doctors who knew almost nothing. The story got into the papers of a doctor in one of the camps who gave all his patients literally nothing but ice-water. The story is true, as I have it from one of the nurses. After a few days of this treatment, during which a number of patients died, and the nurses suffered all sorts of agonies, one of them gathered her courage together, and went to Major —, in command, and reported the doctor. She was commended for so doing, and the doctor was relieved from the charge of his ward. The question arises, should those nurses have obeyed orders at all, in that case? Other curious incidents occur to me, but they will make my letter too long.

Bookland.

WE should like to draw the attention of our readers to two useful little pamphlets: "Work in the Wards by Asylum Attendants," by the Rev. Henry Hawkins, Chaplain of the Colney Hatch Asylum, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Northumberland Avenue; and "Off Duty Invalided," an address to asylum attendants, by the same author, published by Potter, Batten, and Davies, 23, The Pavement, Clapham Common, S.W. We have, in a previous issue, drawn attention to other publications by Mr. Hawkins, which cannot fail to be helpful to those for whom they are written, and the same remarks apply to "Work in the Wards," and "Off Duty Invalided." Mr. Hawkins has, for many years, held the position of Chaplain at Colney Hatch, and, therefore, knows well the needs and difficulties of those for whom he writes.

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