

and many a comfort that we should not have asked for was provided. How can we sufficiently thank her for thus appreciating and supplying our needs? The encouragement received from her kind letters, and more especially her visits, bore me through many a difficulty, and I always knew where to turn for advice and help.

What can I say in regard to the brave women who, knowing fully the risk they were incurring, went forth to fight the battle against sickness and distress? This was truly a fight for humanity. That the danger was no fancied one, the many stricken nurses who were cared for in our hospitals will bear witness. Several have given their lives, and who shall say how many more will be sacrificed? Working twelve, often sixteen hours a day, doing work they were not accustomed to; work that should have been done by orderlies, bathing dirty patients from head to feet, knowing that if they did not, it would not be done, these patients often lying on the floor, the nurse having to stoop until it seemed as if her back must break. I have known a nurse to give ten baths, one after another, in this way.

Putting up with poor food, poorly served, and yet keeping bright and cheerful, and making no complaint. Their rest at night was often broken by the grief-stricken friends of patients seeking rest and shelter in their tents, after long hours of watching beside some loved one who had, perhaps, passed away at midnight, their grief disturbing the stillness of the night. How often have tired nurses left their cots to comfort these poor sorrowing people? If I had allowed it, the nurses would have given up their cots to the patients, sleeping upon the floor themselves. But that could not be; we had to pay some attention to our own comfort, or we would have been in no condition to care for others.

I have asked several nurses who have been under my care, ill with typhoid fever, if they regretted having taken up the work. The answer has been invariably the same, emphatically, "No! had I known the result I should have given my service even at the sacrifice of my life, and I hope to continue in the work if I regain my health."

All felt that it was not alone for the present that they were working, but that the future comfort of our army depended greatly upon the result of trained nurses' work in the camps during this time of emergency. What this result has been is easily seen by its effects in convincing those in power who were most bitterly opposed to having women in army hospitals, that their presence is an absolute necessity in caring for the sick. And to-day the question of organizing a standing army of nurses in proportional ratio to the army of the country, is not only being con-

sidered, but is receiving the support of army men of the highest rank.

That some women got into the camp that were a disgrace to the profession is not to be wondered at when we consider the difficulties under which we were labouring at the time. The sudden demand for large numbers of nurses taxed the resources of the profession to the utmost. There was not time to sift out the numerous applicants when the call came; that should have been done long before, early in the spring, when hundreds of good nurses offered their services and were told they would not be required. Herein lay the opportunity of the adventuress, and many of them profited by it. The presence of these women has, in many instances, made camp life unbearable, and under present conditions it is difficult to remove them. The power of discharging or retaining a nurse lies with the surgeon in charge, and in many cases it suits him better to retain her, and the head nurse can either submit to his decision or resign.

This is a state of things which cannot continue. It will soon be an impossibility for decent women to take up army nursing unless some radical changes are made in the environment of camp life. To effect this, we must begin with the head of the nursing department in Washington. No one but a graduate nurse can fill this position satisfactorily, and with this change accomplished, we should start with a nucleus for the formation of a nursing department in the army, unparalleled in any country. Nurses must be better paid, fed, and housed. Women must be selected for heads of departments who will sustain the dignity of the profession, and who will in no way countenance laxity of morals or discipline. Only by such measures as these can army nursing be successfully carried on and prove a benefit to the country.

So many have asked the question: Where, in your opinion, does the blame lie for all the distress and neglect of the soldiers? This I cannot answer. I took up the work in no spirit of fault-finding or criticism, but to relieve the suffering that lay before me, to modify the conditions where they were unfavourable when I could, and, above all, to assist in establishing a recognition of our profession in the army that would lead to the result now accomplished.

Much suffering and distress could have been avoided by foresight and system, but these were lacking. It was difficult to place responsibility, or to know who was really in charge of the various departments. In this way many mistakes were made; some tents were over-crowded, while others were not filled. No attempt was made to classify cases except in instances where the doctors allowed the nurses to do so in their wards.

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