

condition in which poor Saxon was. We all know how important a contented mind and cheerful surroundings are in sickness, but how could a man be contented or cheerful under the painful circumstances above described? There is ample scope here for the charitable, sympathetic women of New Zealand, and I would strongly recommend the Government to send a number of nurses with each contingent despatched in future, as the majority of men are naturally as incompetent and helpless in the sick chamber as they are impatient and unsympathetic. They do not take kindly to hospital work, and the result is a deplorable neglect of the sick. My experiences in this country have convinced me that a few practical women, trained or untrained, would be infinitely more successful in the treatment of the sick than an army of doctors and their drugs. For what is the use of the latter in the absence of ordinary comforts, sympathy and care? Any man would much rather trust his life to good nursing than to scientific drugging, and it does not require a superfluity of brains to discover which would give the best results. Some of the medical officers have expressed themselves very strongly against the employment of nurses in the field hospitals, but I have seen sufficient to convince me that there is more or less motive in their objections—the women are probably too sympathetic and exacting for the comfort of indifferent medicos. The subject, however, is too wide for treatment here, so I will leave it for a future occasion."

We notice with pleasure that this war correspondent appeals to the "women of New Zealand" to tackle the Army Nursing question, and we most earnestly second his appeal. We would further urge the enfranchised women of the Colony not only to bring the necessity for efficient nursing of sick and wounded soldiers before their own Parliament, but let them go straight ahead and bring their case before the Queen Mother of the Empire and the Imperial Authorities. To our burning shame, we women of England stand futile without the political pale, cheek by jowl with the criminal, the lunatic and the pauper, our voice is as a voice calling in the wilderness. We are voteless, and therefore powerless.

### The Croydon Controversy.

Limited space prevented us last week touching on two important points brought out in the Croydon controversy—first, the manner in which the Guardians dealt with the nurses' petition, and second, the statement made by Mr. Shirley, that the Matron had on no occasion during their three years' service, reported those probationers, whose certificates she had refused to sign.

#### THE NURSES' PETITION.

Very contradictory statements have been made by the Guardians concerning this important document—first, that it was never presented to

the Infirmary Committee, but was forwarded over their heads to the Local Government Board; and second, in the reply of the Guardians to the letter from the Local Government Board, they say:—

"(3) That the petition to which reference is made was fully considered by the Infirmary Visiting Committee on September 25th last, and a deputation of the nurses was interviewed by them on the subject, but as there was evidence that the action of the nurses was instigated by the Matron, it was not deemed necessary to make any recommendation to the Guardians on the subject."

We believe that the contemptuous attitude assumed by the members of the Infirmary Committee towards this deputation of their nurses, and the broad hint these ladies received to "mind their own business" (which surely they were doing) convinced them that there was little hope of just treatment from a prejudiced Board, and that their professional rights would receive more liberal consideration from the supreme authority—the Local Government Board. They therefore appealed to Caesar.

#### THE MEDICAL MIDDLEMAN.

We believe we are right in stating that in the majority of Poor Law Infirmarys, and therefore, presumably, at the Croydon Infirmary, the Matron does not report either verbally or in writing straight to the Board of Guardians, but that written reports made by her are sent *through* the Medical Superintendent, and may or may not, therefore, be brought to the notice of the Committee. This is an obsolete and impossible arrangement, if it is the aim and object of a Board of Guardians to know anything whatsoever, which may be in dispute between a Medical Superintendent and Matron, concerning the Nursing Department.

A Matron's official locked report book should be delivered direct to the Board by the Clerk to the Guardians, and if information is required by them on any point brought forward, the Matron should be requested to attend and give verbal evidence; or, better still, the Guardians should receive the Matron at every meeting, so that she may have an opportunity of speaking with them on nursing matters week by week.

There appears to us no further use for the "medical middleman" in the person of a Medical Superintendent as an intermediary between the Matron and the Board; and the sooner this arrangement is discontinued, the better for all concerned. No doubt, should the Local Government Board decide to hold an inquiry concerning the Croydon Infirmary controversy, many important reforms will result in the management of this institution.

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