

new scheme will depend to a very large extent upon the personality, the organizing ability, and the professional knowledge of the first lady selected to hold that most important office. In fact, the whole Service requires to be reorganised on much broader lines than have hitherto been considered necessary, and the success or failure of that organisation will depend, therefore, to an incalculable extent, upon its initial construction. The Matron-in-Chief has large powers given to her; but they are of such a nature as to require most unusual organising abilities if they are to be performed effectually, and unless the initial organisation be good, the whole of the new scheme may be rendered worse than useless in practical working.

One duty of the Nursing Board will be to draw up in detail a scheme for the proper training of orderlies, a matter which, as we have frequently shown in these columns, is of cardinal importance, but of the utmost difficulty. The responsibility which is evidently to be thrown on the Nursing Board will be very great. If it succeeds, it will accomplish a work of incalculable advantage to the Army and the nation, but the difficulties of reorganisation will be enormous, and the chances of failure, partial or complete, must therefore be considerable.

For the moment, we can only say that the scheme in its broad outlines is fair; and, if efficiently carried out, it should conduce to great and permanent improvements. Of course, at present it is all in outline, and there may be much ground for criticism when the details are filled in. Still the bases, which are proposed are excellent, and it will be recognised that the Report of the Committee represents an earnest effort to bring about a better system of organisation, and to supply a want of which the present war has furnished most palpable proofs. It is highly satisfactory that it is made essential that applicants for the Service shall be accepted on three months' probation, because this will assist in weeding out unsuitable candidates. But we regret to observe that it is proposed to continue the old-fashioned and obsolete standard of "three years' training and service in a civil hospital." As we have frequently pointed out, service in a hospital may mean anything or nothing; and the standard suggested would allow a Nurse who had only one year's training, and who had then, in the

service of the hospital, been sent out private nursing for two years, to become eligible for an Army appointment. It should be distinctly laid down that "a first class certificate of not less than three years' training from a recognized nurse-training school," should be an essential condition of eligibility. And it is also difficult to understand why the nurse should be bound by agreement to serve for only three years. If she is inefficient, three years is too long a term, while, on the other hand, if she proves to be in every way suitable for the Service, her services should be definitely secured for at least ten years.

Annotation.

SIR JAMES PAGET ON THE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

The charming memoirs of this great surgeon naturally contain much that is of interest to nurses, and we hope to review them at length at an early date. At present the pressure on our space is so great that we must content ourselves with noting Sir James Paget's views on the registration of nurses, as embodied in a letter to Sir Henry Acland in 1893. He, then wrote on the registration of nurses:—"I think it is only a question whether it is to be granted at once or a few years hence. The test of 'character' is not really applied in the registration of any class of educated persons, unless it be the clergy. It might have been fairly talked of thirty or forty years ago; but it is becoming absurd to say now that it is necessary for nurses and not for medical men. Here is an example—One of Rolleston's daughters is now a sister at St. Bartholomew's. Why should her 'character' be asked for more than her brother's was when he was registered? And such cases are common. Many brothers become doctors, or dentists, and are registered; their sisters become nurses, and are not registered. Or in the same family, one sister takes a medical qualification, and is registered; another becomes a nurse, and she cannot be registered. The contrast is becoming ridiculous as well as unjust, and must soon come to an end. . . . I should be 'for' registration; but am much 'against' being induced to attend a meeting about it. The older I grow the more I dislike speaking." Sir James Paget's way of dealing with the character question is, indeed, a bold method of severing this Gordian knot.

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