

Military Nursing Notes.

LESSONS DRAWN FROM PRACTICAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH TRAINED WOMEN NURSES IN MILITARY SERVICE.

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It is bad for all concerned to mix graduate with non-graduate women nurses. They are about as incompatible as are physicians possessing and those not possessing degrees. Nurses object strongly to being called *female* nurses, a prejudice possibly derived from the French, who do not apply the corresponding word, *femelle*, to human beings. In the U.S. Army they are styled simply *Nurses*, and their organisation the *Army Nurse Corps*.

I found that the efficiency of trained nurses depended largely upon the kind of treatment they received. When treated justly, kindly, respectfully, and appreciatively, there was hardly any limit to the amount of work they would do, or the hardships they would suffer, well and cheerfully. Like girls at school they were easily stimulated to their best by commendation and encouragement. This method can be applied to *women* without subversion of discipline. Trained nurses take to discipline very kindly. In civil life a great many of them prefer hospital to private work, and those I have served with in the Army like the duty in military better than in civil hospitals.

On many occasions during the Spanish-American War the nurses showed heroism and devotion to duty equal to that of any soldier or sailor in battle. The majority of those with me at Las Animas Hospital had not had yellow fever, yet they all unflinchingly nursed the malignant cases of that disease, staying by those who died to the very last; trying to alleviate suffering and save life, their clothing, hands, and sometimes their faces, smeared with blood and black vomit. One of those Las Animas nurses, Miss Clara Maass, gave up her young life from a high sense of duty. She thought she would be more useful in Cuba as a nurse, after having had yellow fever, and requested to be bitten by infected mosquitoes in order to contract the disease and become immune. I tried to dissuade her from the step, telling her that her life was too valuable to be exposed to such great risk—practical certainty—of taking yellow fever. Nevertheless, she insisted, and the fatal mosquitoes were applied to her arm. Three or four days later, she developed a malignant, hemorrhagic case of yellow fever, from which she died in about a week. She was buried with military honours.

The recent General Order from Major-General

Chaffee, commending the "bravery and conscientious performance of duty" of Nurse Alice Kemmer, Army Nurse Corps, and extending to her his "sincere appreciation of her noble conduct," proves that the same heroic spirit prevails among the trained nurses in the Philippines. The General Order referred to sets forth that "Nurse Alice Kemmer, Army Nurse Corps, having been granted leave of absence, voluntarily relinquished the same, and took upon herself the care of two small-pox patients in an isolation hospital connected with the First Reserve Hospital in this city; one of the patients was the wife of an officer, the other an enlisted man. Miss Kemmer had never had the disease; nevertheless she fearlessly entered upon her self-imposed task, and throughout the months of April and May, 1902, devoted herself to the care of the patients, living in the room with the officer's wife, the enlisted man being in an adjoining room. With never more than two hours' sleep at a time, in intensely hot weather, the nurse attended her patients day and night, and saved their lives."

For a dozen or more years prior to the breaking out of the Spanish-American War, I had had experience with trained nurses in private practice, sanatoria, and civil hospitals, and had, like my other *confrères*, found them essential to the attainment of good results. But, having had no personal knowledge of them in military life, I looked upon them as, with rare exceptions like Florence Nightingale, undesirable in the Army or Navy. To-day, after my service with the Army in Cuba, my conviction is that, valuable as trained nurses are in civil institutions, they are even more so in military hospitals. Like all women, they "love the military," enjoy military surroundings, ceremonies, titles, &c. They are stimulated thereby to greater interest and pride in their duties. In modern military hospitals, the trained nurse is not only desirable, but indispensable; not only a necessity, but a luxury; not only useful, but ornamental.

Rear-Admiral Rixey, Surgeon-General of the Navy, in his annual report, dated October 1st, 1902, to the Secretary of the Navy, strongly recommends the establishment of a Woman Nurse Corps for the Navy. Among other wise observations upon the subject he makes the following:—

That women are the superior of men for the work of nursing there can be no question, and the objection that they are not compatible with military conditions can scarcely apply to institutions of the character of our large naval hospitals. Civil hospitals in every country employ women to do the nursing, and for no other reason than that they fill the position of nurse better than men. . . . It is believed that just as good results can be obtained from the use of women nurses in naval hospitals as in civil. . . . It can be stated with assurance that if the patients were given their choice of a

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