

The Training of Male Nurses.

The drastic changes in the War Office will be welcomed by the nation at large, for half-measures are seldom efficient, and for the last century Army Reform has been an urgent necessity.

But the tenure of office of Mr. St. John Brodrick as Secretary of State for War will always be remembered as the period during which Army nursing was placed on a sound basis, and Mr. Brodrick should have the gratitude both of the sick soldier and of trained nurses, who are alike indebted to him. He it was who received at the War Office a deputation from the Matrons' Council, and subsequently adopted most of the suggestions as to Army nursing organisation incorporated in the Report which that deputation presented. The foundations upon which to build up an efficient Military Nursing Service are now well laid, and, though time must be given upon which to build the superstructure, yet there is every ground for hope that it will at last be worthy of the British nation.

A reform of far-reaching consequence and of national importance is that, for the first time, the orderlies of the nursing section of the Royal Army Medical Corps are to pass through a comprehensive course of instruction and practical work which will enable them to qualify as thoroughly trained nurses. So far, the training in nursing duties given to the nursing orderlies has been insufficient and intermittent; now this is all changed, and they are to have a systematic and comprehensive course of training, both theoretical and practical. Until now, while many male nurses have been employed in this country, no large general hospital has opened its training-school to them, and their experience has been gained in special hospitals. We must look to the military hospitals in the future to provide the community with efficient male nurses.

One of the great difficulties of the past in connection with the nursing orderlies in military hospitals was that the authority of the Ward Sisters over them was merely nominal; now it is definitely laid down in the standing orders for the Royal Army Medical Corps and Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service:—

(1) The nursing recruit will be attached to the wards and will be under the immediate instruction of the Sister and staff nurse.

(2) The Sister in charge of wards, or the non-commissioned officer when there is no Sister, will teach the recruit or recruits the practical management of wards, nursing of helpless patients, administration of medicines, application of external remedies, and the preparation of the various diet drinks, as laid down in the *Manual of the Corps*.

(3) The recruit will attend the theoretical instruction given by the officer and Matron.

(4) The Matron will satisfy herself that the instruction given by the Sisters is in accordance with the syllabus, and is given daily in a systematic manner, and she will detail a Sister to assist in the exami-

nation of the recruits, and will herself take part in the final examination.

In the orders for privates employed as ward orderlies it is also provided:—

295. Ward orderlies will act under the immediate orders of the Sister or non-commissioned officer in charge of the ward, to whom they will at once refer in any case of doubt or difficulty; they will be responsible for the care, cleanliness, and nursing of the sick, and attention to their wants.

296. They will, in hospitals, when working under Sisters and staff nurses, give prompt obedience to all instructions given to them.

297. They will carry out their duties in a quiet manner. They will observe the greatest personal cleanliness, and, when performing nursing duties, will be particularly careful that their hands and nails are kept perfectly clean by frequent washing and the use of the nail-brush (see paragraph 106, Section I., *Manual for the Corps*). They will preserve good order in their wards, be punctual and exact in obeying the orders they receive; and, in dealing with the sick, exercise patience, gentleness, and, at the same time, firmness.

298. They will be responsible to the Sister or non-commissioned officer of the ward for such articles of equipment and bedding as may be handed over to them, the correctness of which they will attest by their signatures on assuming charge (see paragraph 211).

299. In wards not nursed by Sisters, when patients are too ill to look after their personal equipment, the ward orderly will be responsible for the same, and endorse the counterfoil in *Army Book 42* (see paragraphs 213 and 287).

300. They will perform such light duties in the ward as dusting, washing of utensils, cleansing of mackintoshes and splints, as the Sister or non-commissioned officer in charge may direct. They will be held responsible for any damage to drains which may occur owing to poultices, dressings, &c., being improperly thrown into slop-closets or water-closets.

301. They will at once remove from their wards and exchange all soiled linen, bedding, and clothing, and will return to the dispensary all empty medicine bottles and all medicines ordered to be discontinued.

302. They will rise at reveillé and go to their wards punctually at the hour specified, and will not leave them, except at the hour stated on their time tables, without permission of the Sister or non-commissioned officer in charge of the wards.

303. They will make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the Orders for Patients (Appendix 12), and will see that these orders, a copy of which (*Army Form C 345*) is hung up in a conspicuous position in every ward, are understood and obeyed by the patients.

304. In wards not nursed by Sisters they will see that every patient is supplied with a clean towel, shirt, and pair of socks twice a week, and with clean sheets once a week, or more frequently if necessary. All round towels and other cloths must be only used for the special purpose for which they are intended, and changed as ordered.

305. They will assist in bringing the diets from the kitchen at the proper hours, and distribute them to the patients according to the orders on the diet sheets, and will see that no patient gives any portion

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