

comprehend why one department is called combatant, and the other is not—because such a one would have been able to do full justice to the service, or services, of which you have spoken so highly, and he would no doubt have been able to speak from experience and from knowledge of all that the services generally owe to those ladies, the Sisters and Nurses, who have done so much for them of late. (Applause.) There must be, I suppose, some persons present to-night who remember, as I remember, the days when there were no nursing establishments connected with the services, and they must feel, as I feel, what great benefits they have conferred. (Applause.) For we, the medical officers of the service, though we may not so efficiently represent it generally, can, I think, appreciate as well as anybody, what has been done by these ladies who have joined the service. (Hear, hear.) When we think, as we must—or at least all who remember the former days—of how suffering is now assuaged, and of how the comfort of the soldier and the sailor is secured, when we think also of what aid, and support and encouragement it gives to medical officers themselves, who are responsible for the welfare of the sick, to know how much is done by these ladies to secure the carrying out of their instructions, and in contributing to the welfare and well-being of those under their charge—when we think of these things, I say we must feel that the addition of these ladies to the service is a subject for much congratulation. (Applause.) Therefore I have the greatest pleasure in returning thanks for the honour you have done the services in this toast. (Applause.)

Miss LOCH (who was cordially received) said: Sir William Savory, Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very sincerely in the name of all my colleagues in the Navy and Army Nursing services, both in England and in India, for the hearty manner in which you have just responded to the toast proposed by Sir James Crichton Browne, and I thank also Sir James Crichton Browne and Sir Joseph Fayrer for the kind and encouraging words in which they have spoken of our work. I am proud of belonging to a branch of the profession which is dedicated to the service of our soldiers, men who are ready to lay down their lives for their country, and who are frequently called on to do so even in times of peace from the effects of trying climate and of deadly fevers. In England, in the Mediterranean stations, and also in Egypt, Nursing Sisters have worked for many years in the Military Hospitals, and the Nursing in these Hospitals has advanced (as in the civil Hospitals of the present day) to a high pitch of perfection. I trust that we may be able to say the same of India in course of time, and I must here mention most gratefully the cordial support and co-operation that the Nursing Sisters in India have always received from the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, and from a large number of the medical profession in the army. It is only five years since about twelve Nurses were sent out to India to work in some of the military stations there for the first time. Our numbers are now increased to fifty-two for all India and Burmah, but even this increase is a mere drop in the ocean, for the country is so vast that, although Nursing Sisters are placed in a few only of the largest stations, they are scattered in twos and threes and even singly at immense distances apart. It is obvious that this must involve great personal responsibility, and it is of the utmost importance that every Nursing Sister should have received the most thorough training possible. But I feel that the greatest safeguard in this respect has now been afforded by the

Royal British Nurses' Association, which has been so nobly successful in maintaining its views as to the necessity for a very high standard of excellence. On every individual Nursing Sister in India rests the responsibility of achieving conspicuous success—or failure—for the Nursing cause, for in widespread districts the whole scheme is judged by the conduct of the one or two Nurses who are known there; therefore, not only knowledge but also earnestness of purpose and a sincere love of work are needed, for there are many difficulties to contend with. Not one of the least of these difficulties is caused by the fact that there are no Trained Hospital Orderlies in India. Men are drawn at random from the ranks when required for orderly duty, and they are constantly changed and recalled for various drills or for musketry practice, so that it often happens that, supposing there is a severe outbreak of fever, there may be forty or fifty dangerous cases of enteric in the wards and the nursing Sister may not have one soul she can rely on. Possibly the apothecary on duty is the only man in the Hospital who has ever seen a case of fever before, for the native ward servants are not worth considering from a nursing point of view. I very earnestly hope that the next step that the Government will take in the nursing question, may be some scheme by which Hospital orderlies may be obtained on a more regular and established footing, for I fully believe that so small a number of nursing Sisters can only become of real and general use in India, if the stations where they are employed, are used as training centres, which may produce soldier Nurses capable of tending their sick comrades, either in time of peace or on active service. In conclusion, let me express my pleasure and gratification at having been asked to return thanks on this most important occasion. I feel it is an honour rendered to my branch of our profession. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN, in proposing the toast of the evening, said: When in 1887 a few ladies devoted to Nursing, and who thoroughly understood it, met to consider the question of founding the Association for Nurses, I should think that the most sanguine amongst them could hardly have anticipated that, within six short years, a large number of matrons and leading nurses of the United Kingdom, together with physicians and surgeons, would come together to celebrate the establishment of the Royal British Nurses' Association, under a Charter and under the happiest auspices. (Applause.) We may pause to congratulate ourselves on this; but let us pass on to consider the causes to which this extraordinary success is due. In the first place, then, I venture to think that the formation and progress of an institution such as this, belongs to the very nature of things. Look at all the great companies, societies, and institutions of the country; they all tell the same tale. First comes the question of something needful; then the demand and supply; then the combination for a definite purpose of certain persons with common aims; and then the strength which comes of union. That is the history of all the professions; and vain and ignorant, indeed, must have been the belief that the work of nursing—a work of such universally urgent need—could be made an exception to such a law of progress. (Applause.) Here we find the result of one of our social forces, and then you must remember that the task was undertaken by women who thoroughly understood it, who knew what they wanted, and were determined to get it. (Hear, hear.) And then also you must not forget the opposition which was, of course, forthcoming, and which was just active enough to arouse the degree of

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