

siderably increased. As to the manner in which they have performed their duties, we have had frequent and important testimony from both medical officers and soldiers; and we have, moreover, from time to time been privileged to learn the opinion of their usefulness held at head-quarters. In general terms we may say, without fear of contradiction, that all those who have been nursed under the old system—or rather want of system—and under the new *régime*, infinitely prefer the latter; and that almost without exception those who have been attended under the superintendence of the Nursing Sisters give the most unqualified praise to the devotion, carefulness, and efficiency of these ladies. It may, perhaps, be regarded as almost consequential that they have also their keen detractors; but especially amongst the medical officers, there are not wanting some who consider that they do more harm than good, and that, in fact, they are “valueless or harmful.”

It has been, for some time, increasingly apparent to us that a certain amount of feeling against the new workers was developing very undesirable friction, and we must frankly admit that the proceedings of several Nursing Sisters have been neither judicious nor calculated to enhance the dignity of their department. But, on the other hand, such mistakes have been comparatively few, and it is manifestly unfair to condemn many for the faults of one or two. And, it is beyond all question that the excellent work performed by Miss Catherine Loch, Miss Betty, and others, has redounded to the credit of the whole Nursing Department of the Indian Army.

We have been led to consider this matter, at this particular time, by the publication of an article on the subject in our esteemed contemporary, the *Indian Medical Record*, which we reprint in another column, because we are well aware that it accurately represents the views at present held by a number of the officers of the Indian Army Medical Service. It will be observed on reading this article carefully that, while an inquiry into the working of the Nursing Department is asked for, the only definite allegation which is advanced against it is that, “in some corps embraced in the beneficent influence of the Nursing Staff, the mortality among enteric cases during the past two or three years has reached astounding percentages.” It would

have been more satisfactory if the names of the corps referred to, and the percentages in question, had been quoted, and it is difficult to understand why this should not have been done. But, in any case, and putting aside the obvious reply that some epidemics of typhoid fever are notoriously more fatal than others, and that without a knowledge of all the circumstances an “astounding percentage” might mean anything or nothing, one conclusion may fairly be drawn from the statement which we have quoted. It is beyond all question that the writer considers that the “astounding percentages” were due, not to the virulence of the disease, but to the Nursing Staff. In other words, he attributes a certain number of deaths directly to errors committed by the Nursing Sisters. The words, of course, can bear no other interpretation; and if the connection be proved, we frankly confess that no condemnation of the Sisters who were in fault could be too severe. We consider, therefore, that the Indian Government should make an immediate and public inquiry into the statement in question. But until this is proved true, we take the liberty to doubt its entire accuracy.

Annotations.

THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.

THE astonishing announcement which was made (as we reported last week) by the Editorial Committee of the *Nurses' Journal*, that a Member of the Royal British Nurses' Association had been appointed Matron of Charing Cross Hospital, was received with incredulous amazement. “When did Miss Gordon resign?” “Was the appointment advertised?” and other questions were asked on all sides. Enquiry elicited the fact that Miss Gordon had not resigned, and was as much surprised at the announcement as everyone else. What, then, could have been the motive for such a statement? Was it in order to “boom” the *Journal*? Imagine it! “Piper — Extry Speshul — Middlesex Magazine — Unexpected Resignation of Leading London Matron — Reported Appointment — Piper!” Why, the *Journal* would have sold like wildfire in nursing circles, and the Executive Committee might have put almost any price they liked on it! But we confess this does not seem to us a satisfactory solution of the question.

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