

is really an extraordinary thing that the work done by the nurses in this hospital should receive no recognition of any kind."

In the paper we read in London at the time of the Nursing Exhibition on the nursing of our soldiers, we quoted from the printed regulations for Army Sisters and Orderlies, proofs of the thoroughly inefficient system then in vogue, and pleaded for more authority for the Army Sisters and a better and more lengthy curriculum of training for Hospital Orderlies. Very little has been done upon the initiation of the War Office, and we therefore see with much pleasure that, the question is at last receiving publicity in the *Broad Arrow*, the *Naval and Military Gazette*, to which "Marshburgh" contributed the following able and convincing letter, under the heading of the Army Nurse:—

"Now that the Army Medical Service has obtained almost everything that its members desired, it will be well that no stone be left unturned in the effort to make the Service as efficient as possible. It is the object of this letter to call attention to one particular part of the medical organisation in which there seems to be room for improvement, and that part is 'nursing.' There are other matters calling for attention, such as better cooking and dieting arrangements, a simpler form of diet-sheet and returns than the old fashioned system in which the medical officer is called upon to waste valuable time in hours of writing where minutes would suffice, and a better and more accessible surgical outfit. But this letter will deal with nursing alone.

"Here it may be said that the male nurse alone is referred to; not the nursing sisters, who form probably as perfect a nursing staff as it is possible to obtain."

"Under the present system the ward-orderly or male nurse is made to correspond more or less with the so-called duty-man in a regiment. He is available for all guards, special night orderly duty, fatigues, etc., whilst clerks and storemen to a great extent escape most of these duties, and this notwithstanding that the work of the ward-orderly is more irksome than, and, to say the least of it, quite as important as, that of any other class in the Medical Corps. The ward-orderly takes personal pecuniary responsibility for the equipment of his ward; he scrubs the floor and furniture of the ward and conveniences attached thereto; he changes the linen, and has to pay for any loss in the transaction; he indents for, draws and distributes diets; he goes on night duty every fourth or fifth night—sometimes oftener—and maintains discipline among his patients. In addition to all this he is supposed to nurse the sick, administer the medicines (when a sister is not present), feed the helpless, keep himself and the patients clean, and attend a few parades. Moreover, he is enjoined to do all these things while maintaining a gentle demeanour and a pleasant sympathetic manner. It is the fashion to compare these men unfavourably with the nursing sisters. Obviously they will not bear comparison. The sister is practically an officer, highly educated, and well trained before entering the Service. The ward-orderly may have been a labourer from the fields. We cram him through a six months' course of drill, first-aid, and nursing, and then present him to

the Army as the finished article. Should a man display any special skill in managing his multifarious duties he reaps no advantage therefrom. By passing an examination in the theory of nursing, etc., he may become a non-commissioned officer, but from that day he ceases to perform nursing duty. It is thought to be incompatible with his position, though it is not so in the case of the officer or sister.

"This anomalous state of affairs ought to be put an end to. The male nurse should no longer be the hospital drudge—the best nurses should be promoted as nurses and paid extra, like the clerks. Under the usual educational tests, combined with professional skill, they should continue to rise in the nursing section, and should be specially employed on that duty only, as far as possible—to the same extent, that is, that the clerks, cooks, compounders, etc., are in their several branches. In this way we might obtain a body of really skilled male nurses, who would be invaluable on service and in all hospitals where there are no nursing sisters, as well as in the wards for cases which the female nurses are not allowed to attend. Some twenty years ago the senior orderlies of wards were mostly second corporals, but we have gone back on this, instead of extending the system, so that the corporal nurses might become sergeant nurses and so on.

"Exactly how some wiseacre arrived at the decision that a junior private is good enough for a male nurse, whilst an educated lady of social standing is essential as a female nurse it is hard to understand—unless it was solely on ethical grounds apart from any question of nursing skill and zeal.

"In the civil hospital we find a staff-nurse looking after a ward or two; she is assisted by nurses and probationers—all employed on purely nursing duties. In addition there is a staff of women of a lower class known as ward-maids. These maids, in the ordinary course of affairs, are not eligible for advancement to the nursing class. Their duty is to scrub floors, clean brasses, sweep up, empty slops, remove dirty clothes, etc. The unfortunate military male nurse (ward-orderly) is expected to combine the functions of ward-maid and nurse, and the result is not gratifying; the distracted man is everybody's drudge, he has no peace, no thanks, no kudos, nothing.

"When the system of grading orderlies, as first, second, and third-class, came in a few years ago, it was hoped that this meant that the first-class orderly-man was to be nurse pure and simple; but no, he still has to clean the sink, bath-room, w.c., etc., and is told withal that it is highly important that a sick attendant should have clean finger-nails.

"The extreme centralisation of the medical service is probably at the bottom of this extraordinary estimate of the value of nursing duties. The staff at Victoria Street have for years been away from hospital work; they owe their present positions to their ability with the pen; naturally clerical work seems to them to be the most important work in the Army.

"To recapitulate: We want a nursing section on the same lines as the clerks' section. The men in this section to have no more responsibility for equipment and ward cleaning than has the nursing sister now. We may then expect men to strive for places in such a section, whereas under the present system the ambition of every man in the corps is to get away from nursing and ward work whenever he can."

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