

ward work for them. It is easy to understand that the fate of chronic and helpless patients in the hands of such women is no happy one, and that nurses of a different stamp do not care to associate with them as colleagues.

The real hindrance to a good class of nurses applying for posts in infirmary wards attached to workhouses, is no doubt the lack of any professional status. The need of conferring such status upon them, and the good which would result from adopting such a course, has been emphasised both by Miss Wilkie, the Lady Superintendent of the Halifax Workhouse Infirmary, and Miss Julian, Lady Superintendent of the Croydon Infirmary, in the valuable papers we have printed in this Journal.

The formation of a Nursing Department in connection with the Poor Law, would, in our opinion, be followed by the best results, but the constitution of such a department, to deal effectively with the position, must be on the same just lines of professional representation on the selecting Board, as that proposed in the formation of the American Army Nursing Service. Indeed the organization of our Army, Navy, and Indian Army Nursing Services, must, we believe, be eventually remodelled on these lines. It is incredible and insupportable, that in these days, nurses should be selected for government appointments by an exclusively male board, as is also the fact that a letter from a "lady in society" has greater weight with these boards than professional merit. It is quite impossible that exclusively male committees should act satisfactorily in the selection of nursing candidates, and until ladies of position in the nursing world are appointed on to these Boards, we have no doubt that unsuitable candidates will be selected in the future, as has been the case in the past, to the very grave discredit alike of the Government Departments and the Nursing Profession.

Another suggestion which we desire to make, in connection with the difficulty of obtaining workhouse nurses is, that in many cases such nursing might be placed in the hands of religious communities, or of deaconesses, with the best results. It is quite true that many nurses will not endure the monotony and dulness of workhouse nursing, more especially in the smaller workhouses. This is a self-seeking age, and the vocation to self-denial apparently belongs to few. But there are in religious sisterhoods many women, skilled as nurses, whose lives are definitely devoted to the good of others. They do not seek for fame

or for high places, but merely for the opportunity of lightening somewhat the burden of the world's sorrow. What better sphere could they find therefore than the wards of a workhouse infirmary? And, in such women, Boards of Guardians would find what no money they offered could buy. Tender-hearted, refined and educated women, whose professional training would compare favourably with that of any lay nurses. The plan is being adopted, and has been found to work well in Irish Workhouses, why not in our own?

### Annotations.

#### AMERICAN ARMY NURSING SERVICE.

THE Committee appointed to secure, by act of Congress, the employment of graduate women nurses in the hospital service of the United States Army has lost no time in drafting a Bill, and this is now before Congress. The following are the principal provisions.

"The creation of a nursing service commission, military and civil, a part of which shall be women; this commission to have general supervision of the graduate nurses' service of the United States Army.

"The establishment of a thoroughly graded system of clearly defined and responsible nursing service by graduate nurses.

"This service to be responsible to the surgeons-in-chief in hospitals, and to a general superintendent of women nurses in the department of war at Washington, and to the surgeon-general and the nursing service commission.

"The Bill does not require that women nurses shall be placed in small military hospitals in times of peace, but does provide for the service in hospitals at the larger posts, and for an eligible waiting list of competent nurses who could be called into immediate service in time of emergency.

"The general provisions of the Bill, and minor details concerning administration of the proposed system, are based upon the belief that a military hospital should be conducted on the principles of knowledge and responsibility which prevail in good civil hospitals, adapted, of course, so as to maintain army discipline and military dignity.

"The committee believes that a soldier in the service of the country should receive the same high grade of nursing care, as well as medical treatment, in a military hospital, which a civilian receives in a civil hospital, and that training in no other profession—even though it be a kindred

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)