

## Nursing Echoes.

*\*\* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



At last! The question of the neglect of our sick soldiers in the Soudan has been brought before the notice of the nation through the good offices of Captain Norton, M.P. for West Newington in the House of Commons, and to judge from the great interest which his questions have aroused in the press, we may be sure that the subject of efficient nursing for our soldiers must now receive just consideration at the War Office, or the nation will want to know "why not?"

It is now just ten years ago since we drew up and sent in a memorandum to the late Director General of the Army Medical Department, drawing his attention to the urgent necessity for Army Nursing Reform. Where is that memorandum now?

In 1894 we brought the matter before the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association, with the result that an Army Nursing Reserve has been arranged—unfortunately by persons who know very little of the necessities of the case, or who are pledged to the old inefficient system of the War Office, so that no practical good can be effected through the present organization.

THERE remained an appeal to Cæsar—in other words, to the heart and conscience of the British people. That is now being made, and before this all-important question is settled—an absolutely new system of nursing organization for the British Army will have to be inaugurated.

A CORRESPONDENT in the "Morning Post" has much to say on the "Transport of Sick Soldiers," a subject which our contemporary is taking up now that the question of Convalescent Homes is satisfactorily settled. The question is an urgent one, for the present arrangements are unquestionably a disgrace to the nation, and as is stated in our contemporary, "a properly equipped little Hospital Flotilla is one of the first of our national needs." As the transports are now arranged some of the most critical cases "below stairs" are ranged on the lowest deck, where the deadly

stagnant ship air is at its most injurious point. When once the nation realizes these conditions we feel sure that it will demand that they shall be amended.

AGAIN we read, and we entirely endorse the opinion that "it is of the utmost importance that such Hospital Ships should carry a staff of Army Nursing Sisters. The invalid soldier on the transport needs, and needs badly, that comfort and mothering which only a woman's care can give. The Army Sisters, wherever tried, have proved an unqualified success. It is clearly their province to have the care of the sick soldiers on our transports.

THE diet kitchen of the improved Hospital Ship would need to be entirely under the direction of a Nursing Sister. Sick diet as translated in the existing troopship does not nearly come up to the standard of that in the Infirmary of a wayfaring Workhouse. In experienced hands the adequate dieting of the sick is not an expensive matter. The sum at present expended on the food for the invalids of the troopship, food which is wholly unappetising and unsuitable, would amply cover the cost of an effective diet kitchen under skilful and trained management. We have shown that we can equip a Hospital Ship. The greatest success in this direction was the Coromandel, a Hospital Ship used in the last Ashanti Expedition, which was in nearly every particular a model of its kind. But we have no right to wait for active war before getting ready our Hospital Ships. As a matter of routine and necessity they should stand ready and equipped.

THERE is plenty of active service awaiting them in bringing home the victims of the eternal warfare waged against our soldiers by typhoid, malaria, and specific fevers. Had the cheering crowd rejoicing in the Omdurman victory seen the conditions under which the sick Soudan campaigners were brought home, they would have paused somewhat in their rejoicings to reflect on the price the sick had to pay for the triumph. After this Campaign, if ever, a Hospital Ship should have been fitted out for the comfort and carriage of the invalids resulting from a trying Expedition in the Soudan. It is a significant circumstance that the only Hospital Ship figuring in the Campaign was a ship fitted out by the National Aid Society. That such a necessary adjunct to the British Army should have been supplied by a private Society is surely a most eloquent rebuke to the Army Medical Service and the Transport Departments. The question of Hospital Ships as a permanent feature of our Navy affords an admirable field for discussion in Parliament by those Service Members who have

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)