

of exercising authority. Again, their hospital education, while making them efficient in the performance of nursing duties, affords little or no scope for testing their capacity as Superintendents, and for instructing them in the principles and duties of government. The consequence is, there is often a tendency in these nurses, when placed in the responsible positions of Superintendents, to control the nurses under them by restrictive measures instead of maintaining discipline on broad and constitutional lines. The subject is a difficult one on which to speak, because if we draw attention to a glaring instance of tyranny on the part of a Matron, our reasons for doing so are apt to be misunderstood, and we receive letters to say that we are supporting insubordination on the part of nurses. We wish therefore to define the position which we have consistently maintained on this matter. We have always strenuously supported the lawful authority of Matrons, but their control should be of the nature of that exercised constitutionally in a limited monarchy, not the tyranny of an absolute autocracy. In the wards there should be strict military discipline, but in the Home there should be more liberal social life, the nurses should be encouraged to enlarge their general education, and their powers of organization and government should be noted and encouraged. At present our educational system fails absolutely at the point of providing a special education for future Superintendents, and if the nursing profession in this country is to achieve the highest of which it is capable, this failure must be noted, and rectified in the future. It is now recognized that though some women are "born nurses," yet a prolonged course of training is necessary if their talents are to be effectively used, and it is just as true that though some nurses have special qualities fitting them for the superintendence of others, these qualities can only be perfected by education, and therefore a post graduate course for Superintendents must be instituted before our system of nursing education can be considered adequate. Lastly it is evident that the only persons who can estimate whether candidates for such a course possess the qualifications of mind and character likely to make them efficient Superintendents are the Matrons who have had the opportunity of observing them during their training, and it is therefore to the Matrons that the selection of candidates for training must be entrusted.

## Annotations.

### A REASONABLE REQUEST.

MISS GEORGINA HILL renewed her efforts to convince the governors of the Putney Hospital for Incurables at the Annual Meeting that it would be an advantage if women were eligible to sit upon the board of directors. Seeing that the inmates of the hospital, which by the way was built by a woman, are largely composed of women, Miss Hill's contention does not seem an unreasonable one. However, the majority of the subscribers apparently think differently, and Miss Hill's motion, "That, in view of the fact that by far the larger proportion of the inmates of the Royal Hospital for Incurables are women, it is desirable that women be added to the Board of Management," again suffered defeat. An influentially signed memorial was presented, containing the signatures of Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, The Dowager Lady Lytton, Lord Battersea, Lord Davey, etc.

It may not be generally known that the Matron of this institution is a German. Why?

### COLONIAL HOSPITALS.

THE Colonial Nursing Association is doing good work in moving for an inquiry into the conduct of our colonial civil hospitals on the following grounds. Many of these hospitals are built on sites below the fever level, are without paying wards, and are not in connection with cottage hospitals, an arrangement very necessary for the benefit of convalescents. The fact that in many instances, as at Colombo, Aden, Singapore, and Mauritius, the nursing staff is composed of French Sisters certainly calls for some enquiry. Not only is it natural that Englishmen when far away from home should desire to be nursed by their own countrywomen, but the question of efficiency is also an important one. There are few French Hospitals which have nurse training schools as we understand them, and the Sisters sent out to nurse our countrymen are consequently untrained. There is no doubt in cases of critical illness skilled nursing makes all the difference between life and death, and that lives have been lost, which might have been saved, for lack of it. Further it is asserted that some of the French Sisters are forbidden by religious vows from attending certain operations and that these cases are consequently left to the care of native dressers. The appeal suggested, to Mr. Chamberlain, for a thorough inquiry is therefore amply justified. We may

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