

trained nurses of experience and ability and continued to co-operate with them to the end. But with lack of experience at the head, and with nurses recruited from a variety of sources, there was necessarily much chaff among the wheat. A certain amount of good nursing was done, but not half of what could have been accomplished with proper management. Protest upon protest has come to my ears from the nurses and others competent to judge of these matters, and I have received numerous letters asking if some better condition of army nursing could not be established, and insisting upon the absolute necessity of inaugurating a better system, with more order, discipline, and consequently better work. Many good nurses who went into military hospitals during the summer returned home again, not because they were not willing to put up with physical discomforts, but because they could not tolerate the lack of discipline and the looseness of work and conduct, and because they could not conscientiously serve under the young, inexperienced and indiscreet women often placed over them.

Do not understand me as saying that all the hospitals and nurses were unsatisfactory, for just when the stress of work was greatest, the Superintendents of experience and ability with their nurses, chosen by the Red Cross Auxiliary No. 3, did much to minimize the lamentable state of affairs which had existed up to that time. Certainly, then, one of the important lessons to be learned from the war is that the nursing system in the army, as it existed during the war and as it exists at the present day, leaves much to be desired. Sad experience has shown us that those who do the country's fighting, and suffer for their flag, do not in the hour of need receive such good care as many a worthless tramp is thought to be entitled to in a civil hospital. At least let the mothers, wives, and sisters, of the soldiers have the satisfaction of feeling that their loved ones, when wounded or sick, shall have the best nursing procurable. And if women are acknowledged to be the best nurses of the sick in times of peace, why not also in war? Our army surgeons are taken from among the graduates of our best medical schools, our army nurses should be taken from our best training schools for nurses.

But in order to have such a service ready to be utilized in time of war or emergency, the work of organization must be intelligently done in the time of peace. No one will dispute the fact that the country must have always at its command a regular army of trained soldiers. Why is it not then just as logical to keep ever ready a standing army of trained nurses who come up

to a fixed standard, and that the highest in every way. The day for the volunteer nurse, the born nurse, and the enthusiastic patriotic woman to do army nursing has gone by, just as the old and often haphazard methods in hygiene and surgery have given place to modern scientific surgery and medicine, the result of investigation and training. Nor can the nurse who intelligently puts into execution the methods and orders of the scientific physician be made in a day. As a member of the House of Representatives very aptly said: "The work of nurses is a work of their own, it cannot be done by others." There is plenty of work for the energy and generosity of such fine organizations as the D. A. R., and the National Red Cross Society, and our impulse has been, and always will be, to lend a helping hand to them when opportunity affords. But this one particular branch must be left to trained nurses, and if we are to be held responsible for the results of the nursing, the power of making a proper selection of women for the work should rest in our own hands. Only then can our failures be justly cast in our teeth.

But as representatives of the trained nurses of this country, we have felt that before submitting our views to the consideration of the Government, it was necessary to make sure that they had the endorsement of the people at large and especially those who had studied the question of nursing in the army. While considering how to reach this opinion, which, judging from numerous articles in the daily papers and in the magazines, was certainly wide-spread, and while debating how we might get in touch with this friendly aid, we learned to our joy that among the men and women who had so generously given of their time, strength and money to aid in providing skilled nursing during all the long summer, there were not a few who held the same conviction as the nurses themselves, and who, anxious that some permanent good should result from the summer's work and experience, were willing to continue their aid and work for this end when once they were assured that the nurses were willing to undertake permanently this new field of nursing. No time was lost in assuring them of our readiness, and the result was that a meeting was called in New York in December, 1898, under the auspices of the Associated Alumnae of Trained Nurses to confer with those interested as to the proper steps to be taken. It was unanimously decided that a bill should be prepared and presented to Congress to provide for the establishment of women nurses in military hospitals. To formulate this bill and to secure its success a joint committee was formed, composed of women prominent among those who have deserved well of their country, a certain

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