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THE
Nursing Record

EVERY SATURDAY
ONE PENNY.

AND
The Hospital World.
EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

"QUI NON
PROFICIT DEFICIT."

No. 631.

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 1900.

VOL. XXIV.

Editorial.

THE ACCIDENT OF SEX.

SOME discussion and surprise has been caused by the announcement that on the *Maine's* next voyage to South Africa neither Miss Hibbard, the Superintendent of Nursing, nor the four nursing sisters will sail with her, but that the ship will be nursed entirely by male nurses. We must own to a feeling of regret that this is the case, for it has not been easy for women nurses to demonstrate their undoubted right to a place on hospital ships and in base and field hospitals in time of war, and the fact that it has been considered advisable that the *Maine* should be nursed entirely by men may tend to convey the impression that the presence of women nurses on our hospital ships is unnecessary.

But in considering the question, which, in eyes of the lay press, appears to be one of men versus women, the essential points of the case must not be lost sight of. The point upon which we have always, and urgently, insisted, is that the sick soldier is entitled to, and should receive, as highly skilled nursing aid as the sick civilian. Whether that aid is given by a woman or a man, is an accidental considera-

tion. If we believe that openings for women should be limited only by their capabilities, and provided they prove themselves efficient for any given posts, whether as doctors, barristers, or lawyers, such posts should not be withheld from them on the score of their sex, then, conversely, there must be justice all round. and if men prove themselves efficient nurses, posts of responsibility in the nursing profession should be open to them. What is important is, that from an educational point of view they should be equal to their women colleagues, and that their professional training should be as prolonged and as thorough.

Men of this stamp the United States have been able to send here, as any nurse who has met them cannot have failed to recognize. All have been trained, in the Mills Training School, in connection with Bellevue Hospital, New York, of which they are graduates, and are thoroughly efficient to perform the work required of them. They bear no more resemblance to our own inadequately trained Army orderlies than does the certificated nurse to the "First Aid" pupil of civil life. They are, moreover, drawn from a different rank of life from that which has provided, to any appreciable extent, the so-called male nurses in this country, and from this point

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