

organized nurses of the country do not yet have to become responsible for the work of nursing the army. They have worked for the cause, stood for their principles, and now that a kind Providence has saved them for the present, they ought to feel thankful for the respite. The army needs re-organizing on the "merit" basis, and until this is done, a trained nurse at the head of the army nurses, as well as those in charge of wards and hospitals, would find it impossible to enforce a high disciplinary and professional standard if this happened to conflict with the personal preferences of officers in command. The army is seamed with "political pull" and "influence." The present nursing system simply is forced to adapt itself to this state of things, and does so.

One or two of the many incidents that have actually occurred will serve to illustrate. A party of army nurses went from Florida to Cuba, during the period of army nursing there, having been regularly requisitioned. They were in charge of a nurse of the utmost refinement and nobility of character and high professional attainments. On the way over, they were treated like pariahs by the ship's captain and officers, and found, to the indignation of the innocent ones, that among them was a bad woman, and that they were all under suspicion. Arrived in Cuba, this bad woman was met by a carriage, provided by one of the *military hospital officers*. The nurses, after walking half a mile, were turned into a field, where they were left to camp for the night on the bare ground, no tents having been provided. Fortunately for them, not all men had such unmanly souls, and some engineers near by voluntarily gave up to them their tents for the night.

Now, complaints of such things as this, to reach the head of the Nursing Service, must go through military channels; that is, the very officer in question must be asked to transmit the complaint made against him! It is easy to imagine how fast reform could work under such circumstances. In this particular instance, personal letters, and, later, verbal statements of these and of further wrongs, made to the head of the Nursing Service, received the reply (kindly made) that unofficial complaints could not be considered—only letters coming through military channels could be recognized. Supposing, then, our Bill, having passed, and a trained nurse being responsible for the Army Nursing Service, what would she do under similar circumstances? We all know how easily and deftly men in authority in institutions can unload all responsibility on to the shoulders of women in subordinate positions. How much more easily could it be done under the haughty domination of militarism! In civil

hospitals, nurses who meet trying conditions often find protection and support against this dominating officialism, in the lay element, the managers and contributors; and in our army work those nurses who were supported by the voluntary associations—the Red Cross, the Daughters of the Revolution, and others—had a powerful safeguard in the backing of these influential men and women. Even such an autocracy as the army must feel their moral support, back of the nurse. But a nursing corps made a part of the army system, cut off from every outside aid, and trying to maintain an ideal discipline and morale, is bound to have a very hard time whenever this discipline interferes with the preferences of an officer such as the one mentioned. For the difficulty will come in right here. Although most army officers would be honourable and right-minded and would treat the nurse well, yet they would not support her in resistance or opposition to the dishonourable and bad-minded man, still less in making any exposure of his doings. *Esprit de corps* forbids. She would look to them in vain for help. Could military prestige and dominance permit a woman to interfere and assert herself? What authority could she oppose to theirs? There would come times, it is easy to imagine, when she would be forced into one of two alternatives—resign, or accept the inevitable, as the present army nursing head is compelled to do. It is well-known among nurses here, that official correspondence is in existence, stating plainly that various nurses have been withdrawn from their posts because they had "too high a standard."

All this does not mean any limpness of belief in the *rightness* of having a properly organized nursing service; it is only a study of the black side of the cloud.

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We learn from a correspondent in the States, that there is great unanimity amongst American Matrons and Nurses on the question of the International Council of Nurses, and that it is probable that a National Council of Nurses of the United States will be organized at an early date, and that the two great Societies composed of Superintendents and Graduate Nurses' Alumnæ, may unite to form it, with a view to affiliating to the International Council. This is a most encouraging item of news, and will encourage us here in England, where we are also busy considering a practical scheme of professional organization.

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We hear that Miss L. L. Dock's new book is in the press, and that it is published by a nurse, Miss Longeway. We shall hope to review it at an early date.

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