

deputation on the ground of the pressure of public affairs, but expressed his willingness to receive a written report. This, however, the Matrons' Council did not see its way to provide. It is noteworthy that the Matrons' Council laid great emphasis on the need for the appointment of a trained and experienced nurse as head of the Nursing Department at the Admiralty in the following words:—

"Now that the subject of Naval nursing is under consideration the occasion seems opportune for suggesting the need of the formation of a Nursing Department, in affiliation with the Medical Department, at the Admiralty, superintended by a fully-trained and experienced nursing officer. Duties which might advantageously be relegated to such an officer might be:—

1. In conjunction with the Director-General, to deal with all matters of organisation and discipline in the Nursing Department.
2. In conjunction with the Director-General, to select all nursing officers.
3. The periodic inspection of the nursing and domestic departments of Naval hospitals."

It will be seen that the minds of many experienced members of the nursing profession in this country have been brought to bear upon the subject of the best method of the organization of Government nursing departments, and that it appears to them all-important that these departments should be under the superintendence of an experienced nurse, working in conjunction with the Army Medical Department. It must be noticed that many American Superintendents have been strenuously urging the same point in connection with the Army Nursing Department now being organized in the United States. It may therefore be regarded as an accepted fact that there is a general consensus of opinion amongst those competent to judge on this point.

#### NEED OF A NURSING DEPARTMENT AT THE WAR OFFICE.

It is therefore with the greatest pleasure that we observe this reform, advocated by the writer of the article to which we have alluded in so influential a paper as the *Morning Post* in the following terms:—

"We have no woman at the War Office engaged in recruiting and organising nurses for active service. In the United States a medical woman has been appointed Acting Assistant Surgeon, and she is responsible under the Medical Director-General for the efficiency and general conduct of the American Army Nurse Corps. Without such an appointment it is quite easy to formulate a definite plan of action."

We must say, however, at once that no scheme can be considered acceptable, or final, which does not place a trained nurse, and not a medical practitioner (whether a man or a

woman), at the head of the Army Nursing Department.

Again we read:—

"The first step towards organising an effective nursing reserve corps is to make this a branch of the Army Medical Department, and place the responsibility of formation and efficiency in Government hands. At present the reserve nurses are not selected by the War Office. Indeed, until they go on active duty they are not subject to Government supervision or authority at all. The management of the corps is in the hands of a lay committee. Such a situation has no logic."

#### WAR OFFICE RESPONSIBILITY.

"The War Office in time of war is called on to assume responsibility for a corps which for the greater part of its existence is placed out of Government control. When the Nurses go on active duty they are paid a salary out of the war estimates—hence they must come under direct Governmental authority. In times of peace, when they are reserves in reality, they are naturally an unpaid body. But this fact does not relieve the War Office of its responsibility that the reserves—since these are Government servants *en parole* to come out when required—shall receive every assistance towards becoming efficient military nurses. A lay committee, however well-intentioned and unsparing of effort, cannot be expected to undertake the technical training of Army nurses."

#### AMERICAN NURSE CORPS.

"The Americans, with their usual practicality, are evolving an admirable nurse corps out of the chaotic and promiscuous state of military nursing matters existent at the beginning of the Spanish-American war. Their plan is to settle on some uniform standard of training, and to institute a special system of preparation for Army Nursing. Our reserves represent, perhaps, some thirty or more different training schools, and until they meet on active service they have never been brought together even so far as to attend a lecture or demonstration on the special exigencies of war duty."

We are glad to notice that the need for a definite standard of education is emphasized. We directed attention to this defect in the Army Nursing Reserve, in our issue of November 4th last year, and again on November 25th, when we also pointed out that the members of this body are not equipped by practical experience for the positions of Army Nursing Sisters. Now that so influential a paper as the *Morning Post* has shown its practical sympathy with Army Nursing Reform, it is to be hoped that it will continue to use its influence to help those trained nurses who have, during the last six months, taken the initiative in evolving a practical scheme for the better care of our sick soldiers both in time of peace and war, to place their valuable experience at the disposal of the nation. No Governmental Department or Committee, which ignores the practical experience of trained nurses in defining the organization of the Army Nursing Service, can hope to evolve a satisfactory system.

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