

The American Nursing World.

THE ORDER OF SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR NURSES.

[By our Special Correspondent.]

THE nurses of the Army Service, who had, just after the Spanish-American War, drawn together for the purpose of erecting a monument to those who gave up their lives, have now, in the past week, completed a permanent organization called the Spanish-American War Nurses.

Mrs. Lounsbery, who followed Miss Maxwell at Chickamauga, had been very active in the Monument project, and was largely instrumental in fostering the spirit of comradeship.

New York was selected as the meeting place of the "veterans," and Miss Sutcliffe opened for their use the large new parlours of the New York Hospital.

The general reception was a very pleasant occasion, and numerous civilian nurses enjoyed the opportunity of hearing the war-maidens' tales.

"How much they must all know that they will never tell!" exclaimed an outsider in regretful tones.

Certain it is that they have had all kinds of experiences, and it must be delightful for them to meet annually and compare notes.

Dr. McGee was at the reception. Miss Hibbard of the *Maine*, dignified and charming, met the guests, and Mrs. Lounsbery circulated genially about.

The luncheon was the important event. At a raised table sat the speech-makers, and flags bearing the names of the various army posts showed where the nurses were to sit. Animation did not wane.

Amongst the toasts given were:—

"The Daughters of the American Revolution and their work during our late war." Response by Mrs. Whitelaw Reid.

"The III. Auxiliary of the Red Cross and their work for the nurses." Response by Miss Mary Desha.

"The United States Army Nurse." Response by Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee.

"The Nurses of Montauk Point Hospital." Response by Dr. Laura Hughes.

"The Nurses of the Civil War." Response by Mrs. Douglass.

"The Nurses in Manila." Response by Miss Mary Gladwyn.

"The Sisters of Charity in the Late War and the Civil War." Response by Miss Dorsey.

"The Nurses who Went to South Africa." Response by Miss Hibbard.

The responses to the toasts were listened to with deep interest, and they were well

given. Miss Gladwyn refuted some ill-natured and sweeping assertions which have been made of nurses in Manila, and all bore emphatic testimony to the splendid work of our army nurses as a whole, and to their endurance in suffering actual privation and physical hardship. The failings and imperfections of a few here and there cannot find place in the general summing up.

But in conversation it is acknowledged that the glamour of the uniform is too much for some women to withstand, and, indeed, we all know that there are those who cannot keep their heads in a strongly masculine environment. It was interesting also to hear a nurse of wide experience say that the men nurses trained in the Mills School showed to superior advantage in that they did not have moods, or ups and downs, so that, while they were equally good nurses as the women, they were really superior as to evenness of temper. We may well lay these little points to heart, for is it not possible for us to improve our weaknesses?

The army nurses elected Dr. McGee their President for the ensuing year. This was, perhaps, natural, but one may well question the soundness of the principle involved in the official and disciplinary head of the Army Service being the elected head of their voluntary organization. One wonders how much independence of expression and of action the nurses will have in the management of their Order. They look to Dr. McGee for their positions in the Army, and can they but be somewhat constrained always to defer to and follow and never to oppose her in their organization? One might almost think that a delicate sensitiveness for the personal dignity of others would prevent one from holding two such positions at the same time.

Dr. McGee has great personal charm. She is pretty and fascinating. There is no doubt that many of the nurses feel a romantic admiration for her. She is an adept at Parliamentary procedure and carries off a meeting with grace and brilliancy; true, the inexperienced ones may not always be encouraged to develop, just as those teachers who do things best themselves do not always draw out the best from their pupils.

Had Miss Hibbard cared to encourage a wish to nominate her, it is quite possible she might have had the chief office. Her reasons, however, for declining to have her name up were in accordance with her candid and direct nature. The membership qualifications were somewhat timidly constructed, as is natural in the beginnings of organization. However, the important thing after all is, not how they begin or why they begin, but that they have begun.

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