

not that men through whom that report goes either wilfully misconstrue it, or are in any way not inclined to deal generously and fairly both by the report, and the Head Sister who makes it, but the fact remains that she should make her report *direct* to the *head* of her *own department*, that head being a member of her *own profession* who would deal with it in *conjunction* with, and *subordinate* to the Medical Director-General.

We are informed that, in America, a woman has been appointed "Acting Assistant Surgeon," and that she is responsible under the Medical Director-General for the conduct and general management of the Army Nursing Service. Excellent as this may be, as a step in the right direction, it is not sufficient. The woman, to be thoroughly efficient and fit for the intelligent supervision of a body of trained nurses, must *herself* be *one* of them; she must have passed through the recognised curriculum of a large General Hospital, she must have had experience in the *organization, direction* and *selection* of a nursing staff—in fact, have been herself a *Matron*; and further, she should have had opportunities to grasp any specialities in the working of the Government Department she is elected to represent.

The duties incumbent upon such an office cannot be better defined than in the Report drawn up by the Honorary Officers of this Council for the consideration of the Admiralty.

1st.—In conjunction with the Director-General to deal with all matters of organization and discipline in the Nursing Department.

2nd.—In conjunction with the Director-General to select all nursing officers.

3rd.—The periodical inspection of the Nursing and Domestic departments of Government Hospitals.

In order to obtain the *right* person, the salary must be *generous*, and the pension *good*. It is useless to expect women, any more than men, to accept great responsibility in arduous, and often trying posts, unless they see, in the reasonably near future, some prospect of legitimate rest, and well-earned relaxation.

That such posts would be difficult to fill I cannot believe; the increased period of training, and the higher education of the nurses of the present day, has resulted in a large body of professional women, many of whom would be quite competent to act in such a capacity with ability. I should like to state here, most emphatically, that I am not in way attempting to wrest authority from the hands of the medical men, nor do I wish to call into existence beings who will bring friction and discord into the

hitherto peaceful surroundings of the Government Offices!

The Administrative Nursing Officer must only exist in conjunction with and subordinate to the Director-General, bringing the experience of her specially trained mind to bear jointly with his on deliberations which are to effect the working of his and her department alike.

It is the *partially* and *indifferently* trained nurse of to-day who is the cause of the sneers and gibes sometimes hurled at "the modern trained nurse." The more thorough the training, the more complete is the realization on the part of the nurse that, in all matters relating to the patient, her aim is to become an efficient and reliable means of carrying into effect the orders of surgeon or physician; and when in cases of emergency he is temporarily beyond reach, to be able to act in an intelligent manner as he would direct. But this does not allow that in domestic management, general organization and direction of the nursing staff, and its selection, that the medical man ought to be the authority. There is abundant proof that, in the best managed civil hospitals, the Nurse Superintendent has entire control of the nursing staff, and is directly responsible to the Committee, and then work proceeds in an orderly and harmonious manner.

We must look briefly at another branch of the Nursing Service which is very much "en evidence" just now, and in whose hands lie the welfare of many a brave man. The Army Nursing Reserve requires, from its very nature, a trained, experienced and able head. Under the most favourable circumstances, if there are any in war, the organization and management of a body of women trained in all sorts of Hospitals in all sorts of ways, would present difficulties well nigh insuperable. Some of them come from Institutions which professedly do not admit within their walls the very fevers which constitute the great enemy in the rear of an army. They are of necessity a heterogeneous mass not bound together by any of the traditions of one Hospital, nor any of the *esprit de corps* which would cement a permanent body. The large majority of them have never been in a Military Hospital, and are totally ignorant of military routine in times of peace, to say nothing of time of war; when emergencies have to be faced, difficulties to be overcome, discomforts and privations to be endured, not as one can, but as the military authority directs. When you think of a mass of over 600 women sent into South Africa under no organized supervision, we can only rejoice that they have in so very many cases proved themselves worthy.

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