

be on the same footing as that of the Director-General in the R.A.M.C."

With the suggestion that the Lady Superintendent should not be appointed by the Director-General, we are fully in sympathy; but with Miss McCaul's suggestion that "the election should be made by a suitable Council, which should include three Matrons from large civil hospitals," we cannot agree. The Principal Nursing Officer, like the Principal Medical Officer, should, of course, be appointed by the Secretary of State for War. Patronage must be eliminated in the organisation of a Nursing Department at the War Office, and its control vested in the department maintained by the British tax-payer, which, through the Secretary of State for War, is directly responsible to the nation.

Every experienced nurse will agree with Miss McCaul that "the present system upon which the Army draws its nursing reserve is almost ludicrous. Any nurse who has a certificate of three years' hospital training can apply to be taken in the Reserve." Matters would not be so bad if a three years' certificate were a necessary qualification; but numbers of women have been pitch-forked into South Africa by the present Reserve Committee with certificates of one or two years' training, and, in numerous instances, with no certificate at all!

The Matrons' Council recommends that, as a fundamental principal, any such Reserve must be an integral part of the Army Nursing Service, and, consequently, under the War Office, both in times of peace and war; and adds that "effective organisation can only be accomplished by the hearty co-operation of the Army Medical and Nursing Departments," and its recommendations for a standard of training and qualifications would, we venture to think, prove thoroughly practical and efficient.

Miss McCaul says: "No one should be allowed to enter her name for a Reserve nurse until she has entered her third year of hospital training." In our opinion, no nurse, until she has completed her three years' curriculum of training, passed her examinations and obtained the certificate of efficiency from her training school, should be considered qualified for the Army Reserve Service. Perhaps Miss McCaul is not aware that every training school for nurses of repute in Great Britain, her Colonies, and the United States, has now accepted the three years' term of training as a minimum standard, with the exception of the London Hospital, and, no doubt,

this school will see the wisdom of working up to the higher standard in the near future.

Miss McCaul has some original and eminently practical suggestions to make with regard to the equipment of stationary field hospitals, whereby it would be possible to care for the wounded near the front and decrease their sufferings very materially. We should advise every one interested in Army Nursing to read this article.

The Hon. Sydney Holland, Chairman of the London Hospital, has conceived an intolerant antipathy to the Matrons' Council, and the fact that a deputation of this society of trained nurses has been courteously received at the War Office, and permitted to plead for military nursing reform, aroused the "green-eyed monster" which, unfortunately, animates men of a certain type in relation to intelligent women. So Mr. Holland wrote a petulant little letter to the *Times*, and warned its readers to beware of these "fictitious" females.

Of course, this attack was answered by a member of the deputation, whose reply, whilst refuting Mr. Holland's inaccuracies, wisely improved the occasion by pleading for the *raison d'être* of the visit to the War Office. To quote:—

"May I avail myself, sir, of this opportunity to urge the crying need of reforms being made at once in the conditions of Army Nursing? There are grounds for believing that hundreds of valuable lives might have been saved in the present war if these conditions had been based on modern principles; and that, if the war continues, still further and equally unnecessary losses will be caused. Surely this is a matter above and outside all political considerations. It comes home to every one of us who have near and dear ones risking their lives for their King and country in that distant land, men who may at any moment be struck down by disease, who might easily have the same nursing care which is given to the poorest in England, but whose lives might be further endangered by the lack of such attention.

It was to urge the institution of practical reforms for the saving of our soldiers lives that the Matrons' Council sent its deputation to the War Office; and it received a most courteous hearing. But it is the nation, after all, which must provide the motive force in every movement for reform. Is it too much to hope that Parliament will appoint a Select Committee to inquire into this vitally important matter. To-day it is the lives of our brave soldiers which are at stake. In the near future the matter may involve far greater issues, for voluntary service will be possible only so long as the soldiers and their womenkind are convinced that England appreciates their devotion and values their lives. To give the defenders of the Empire less than the best possible care when they are struck down in its service would be to give them not only less than they deserve, but less also than a generous and a grateful nation desires them to receive."

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