

## The American Nursing World.

(By Our Special Correspondent.)

### THE TRAINING AND CONTROL OF MALE NURSES.

THE scandals of Bellevue Hospital, in New York, as retailed in the public Press, are most deplorable, and are bringing humiliation and disgrace to more than one set of people. The inquiries have fastened the conviction of dishonourable practices upon various members of the medical profession; the corruption of lay officers of the hospital under machine politics, and the injury sustained by the Mills Training School for Male Nurses cannot yet be fully estimated.

Incidentally we women nurses also come under the cloud, as a large mass of the public is quite unaware of the existence of a training school for men at Bellevue, and, reading in the papers of abuses of patients by "nurses," concludes that the women nurses are the culprits in question. So closely are we all related, that the misdeeds of one are reflected promptly upon all. So far eight or ten of the men nurses have been involved in the inquiries, and it is reported that many more have resigned. It is the greatest kind of a pity for the many faithful and efficient men who have been and now are pupils of the training school. Many of them have gone on record as capable and devoted nurses, and there is so much need of trained male nurses—there are so many cases both in hospital and private practice that a woman cannot handle—that it would be a real misfortune should the training of men be looked upon as an unsuccessful experiment.

To my mind the moral enforced by all this exposé is—not that men nurses should cease to exist, but that they should work under the direct supervision and guidance of a woman. These young men have had a woman superintendent, and an excellent one, but they should also have a woman head nurse (sister) in each ward. Instead of this, undergraduates of their own number have been acting as head nurses in the most difficult wards of Bellevue—the alcoholic wards—where the worst specimens of male depravity are brought to recover from delirium tremens, and the insane pavilion, where all and any cases of insanity are temporarily held pending transfer. Women alone could not manage these violent and abnormally strong patients, but neither can any set of young men be entrusted alone with such responsibility. I doubt if young doctors would have done better, alone, than the nurses. The whole secret is that men do not do such work in the best way of their own initiative, but only when stimulated and encouraged by the

right kind of a woman. With a woman head nurse, of gentle and gracious influence, present in the wards, these things would not have happened; the young men's best qualities would have been on a higher level.

This is no idle theorising on my part, but the result of experience and observation. There was, for instance, the County Hospital, of Chicago, with over one thousand beds, always full, and often overflowing. Here were wards containing sixty and eighty beds, with women nurses from the training school, and salaried graduate head nurses. The County provided no paid domestics for the housework of the wards, so that the head nurses had to organise a kitchen, dining-room, bath-room, and orderly staff from among the convalescent patients. There were, fortunately for my argument, two male wards in the hospital, where the training school was not admitted, and these gave the most perfect object lesson imaginable, in proof of what went on under purely male management. Filth, discomfort, and every kind of bad management reigned supreme; the doctors totally unable to cope with the situation, whereas in the male wards, under the nurses, the men willingly and cheerfully kept floors and closets clean, washed dishes, carried food trays, scrubbed bath tubs, were kind and obliging to the patients, and really displayed a system and a taste for symmetry superior to that of the convalescent women patients of the same social grade. These, of course, were uneducated men. But I have lately visited in two hospitals where women hold the position of head of the whole hospital, with full authority including even power to regulate and discipline the young medical men in everything, except simply the professional care of the patients, and I would willingly challenge any hospital to show proof of better management in any department, or a more desirable "esprit de corps." The atmosphere of tranquil and cheerful order, of home-like security, of ready courtesy, meets one as one opens the door. There is simply no comparison between the customary behaviour of the resident medical men here, and in some other places I could mention, where, to say the least, they are not always encouraged to remember that they are gentleman. It is better for these young men in every way, and they show that they realize it by going to the woman head, as they would to their mothers, for a thousand little helps and advices.

### ARMY NURSING.

Dr. Anita McGee's retirement from the Army Nursing Service, and the appointment of a nurse to the position left vacant has been a surprise to many of us. Those who do not take rosy

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