

would have been invaluable. It is much, however, that the committee has been appointed; we most heartily welcome its formation, and the next best thing to the presence of women experts upon it is that they should offer their evidence to those who form it. We hope that all those who have written during the last few months to this journal on the subject of poor law nursing, that the members of the Workhouse Nursing Association, whose work, in combination with that of the Press, has doubtless been a factor in bringing the Committee of Enquiry into being, and last, but not least, women who have had experience as Matrons and nurses in workhouse infirmaries under the Local Government Board, will now come forward to give the evidence which is essential if the work of the Committee is to be effective. We hope, also, that experienced Superintendents, who are in touch with well-trained nurses, will offer their evidence as to the reasons why these nurses refrain from applying for poor-law appointments which, from a monetary point of view, are desirable, and which under happier conditions would be certainly sought after.

A MATRON-IN-CHIEF AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD OFFICE.

In this country the usual routine in public departments is to institute an enquiry before making radical changes, and the appointment of the present Departmental Committee will no doubt commend itself to the community at large. But we have no hesitation in saying that the only possible outcome of the deliberations of this Committee, if it is to deal effectively with the Poor Law Nursing problem, is the formation of a Nursing Department at Headquarters with an Executive Nursing Officer in charge, in whom shall be vested the necessary authority to organize, regulate, supervise, and inspect the nursing department in workhouse infirmaries throughout the country. The Superintendent of Nursing in each infirmary should be required to furnish periodical reports on her department to this Matron-in-Chief, and thus order would be evolved and discipline maintained. The War Office has found it necessary to form such a Nursing Department, and nothing short of this will effectively touch the Poor Law Nursing difficulty. The sooner this is done the better for the credit of the Local Government Board, the honour of trained nurses, and the well-being of the sick poor.

Annotations.

OUR ARMY NURSES.

The Committee appointed by the Council of the British Medical Association to consider the report of Mr. Brodrick's Commission on the Army Medical Service have just issued a Report which has been unanimously accepted by the Parliamentary Bills Committee, from which it would appear that the Committee is in favour of the continuance to the Director-General of the Army Medical Service of the almost absolute powers given to him under the old *régime*. With the Medical Service we have no concern, but we must point out that, in the case of the Army Nursing Service, it would be fatal to make its efficiency dependent upon the comprehension of its requirements by the Director-General in office. The standard of efficiency, the numerical strength of the Service, and the discipline of its members can no longer be left to the absolute discretion of the Director-General of the Army Medical Department to determine. The nursing *débauché* in South Africa has proved the necessity for radical reorganization. The nation must see to it that the best expert nursing knowledge available is utilised in the selection and control of the women who are entrusted with the honourable and responsible duty of caring for our sick and wounded soldiers.

THE LOVE OF LIFE.

We know that the preservation of life is the first instinct of man and beast, but at no time in the history of the world has the love of life been keener than at the present time. Newspapers cater for the taste of their readers by daily articles dealing with every detail of science which affects human life—the true investigator and the quack receiving equal publicity—with the result that every day some new microbe detrimental to man is discovered, some new treatment for disease advertised, or some infallible quack cure recommended.

For instance, a Vienna medical paper states that an Austrian scientist has discovered that a cold in the head is due to the presence in the membrane of a special bacillus which he has called *micrococcus catarrhalis*.

A young Austrian physician has discovered a means of connecting part of the oesophagus with the stomach (when food cannot be taken in the ordinary way) by means of a tube laid

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)