

must, of course, be guided by the reports of the medical officer in charge and of the senior sister. However, one golden rule enjoins that if the report be unfavourable, it must be communicated to the sister concerned; so if she thinks that any injustice has been done, she has an opportunity for representing her side of the case.

The sisters' intercourse with the medical officers will almost invariably be pleasant; as a rule they thoroughly appreciate good work, and the prejudice against "women in military hospitals" is almost non-existent in India. The person with whom it is sometimes difficult to work harmoniously is the Eurasian "assistant-surgeon." He combines the functions of a dresser and a dispenser, and is supposed to maintain discipline in the wards.

But while all the above conditions of service are fair, and although the sisters' Indian life may be in every way a pleasant and useful one, there are at present some grave drawbacks in the Indian military hospital system which are a hindrance to successful nursing work. The principal changes which, in the writer's opinion, ought to be introduced are: (a) in the training of orderlies; (b) in the army native hospital corps.

(a) At present, a rough, uneducated private is introduced into a ward full of enterics. At the end of three months a miraculous change is supposed to have been effected, whereby the man is fully qualified to work by himself in charge of a ward in some hospital where there are no sisters.

Why should an uneducated man be thought capable of learning the whole art of nursing in three months, when a well-educated woman cannot be trained in less than three years? In three months the orderly can be taught to fetch and carry, to do as he is told, and to be a fairly useful pair of hands while working under a trained head. But the training of orderlies to fit them for independent posts should surely be prolonged for at least twelve months. Then only the exceptional men, possessing the moral qualifications of sobriety and intelligence, should be given certificates. At present the orderly's certificate is not worth the paper on which it is written.

(b) The army hospital native corps is at present composed of the scum of the bazaars, insufficiently paid, working under impossible conditions (*e.g.*, a fine of two annas per month can be deducted *once* only during the month for grave misconduct among the lowest grade). Until some radical reform takes place whereby respectable natives, properly paid and severely disciplined, can be obtained, the native service of the hospital will always be a bar to really efficient work.

The chief reforms suggested in the present conditions of the working of the service are:—

(a) That a messing allowance of 100 rupees per annum be granted.

(b) That the time of the orderlies' training be increased to twelve months.

(c) That the army hospital native corps be remodelled so as to secure a certain measure of efficiency.

In conclusion, the Indian Army Nursing Service offers every prospect of happiness and congenial work to a well-trained, strong, and healthy woman. The drawbacks which can be removed are minor ones, and the chief drawback—that of hard work in a bad climate—must be taken into account by each individual candidate before entering the service.

## The American Nursing World.

### A TRAINING SCHOOL FOR COLOURED NURSES.

Charleston, South Carolina, has a training-school for coloured nurses, with a former Philadelphian at its head in the person of Dr. Lucy Brown. She is assisted by eight well-trained coloured physicians.

The establishment of a hospital and training-school proved an incentive to the young coloured women of the State, in opening up a new avenue for earning a living; not only that, but it also gave to the medical profession the much-needed assistance of the skilled nurse.

The *Charleston News and Courier* says of Dr. Brown's work:—"Ten years ago there was not in the State of South Carolina a practising woman physician; not because they were not needed or could not be supported, but because they did not choose that field of labour. During the year 1896 Dr. Lucy Hughes Brown, a graduate of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, went to Charleston, S.C., to begin the practice of medicine; a temporary licence was granted her till a meeting of the State medical board the following year, when Dr. Brown made a record which would reflect credit upon any high-class medical institution. The State Press did not fail to publish this fact, that the city in which she hung out her shingle was always of a conservative spirit, and, knowing this, it might have been supposed that she would have met with opposition; but not so, she was received with open arms, both by the medical fraternity and the public. Charleston had for fifteen years enjoyed the distinction of having more coloured physicians than any other city in the State. This woman physician soon became one of the recognised leaders in the profession, and was foremost in the establishment of a hospital and training-school for nurses."

The establishment of training-schools for coloured women is a question which is of extreme interest to all who believe in the latent possibilities of the coloured races provided they have equal opportunities, with those more favoured, for education and development.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)