

Zealand nurses were most keen and eager to go to the seat of war as army nurses, but at first the Imperial authorities would not accept them. Eventually it was agreed to accept a certain number on condition that their passages were paid to South Africa, and about twelve were sent from the Colony, the principal towns each subscribing funds to pay the travelling expenses of a nurse. Miss Speed preferred to go at her own costs, and, furnished with letters of introduction, went direct to Cape Town, and, when she arrived, applied and was accepted as a member of the Army Nursing Service Reserve, in which she worked for two years on the same footing as English nurses.

The New Zealand nurses were courteously received by the military authorities and sent first to Wynberg and then up country. When she arrived, in August, 1900, the impression Miss Speed received was that every effort was made for the well-being of the sick and wounded. As the work of the Royal Army Medical Corps has been subjected to so much criticism, she was, she said, glad of an opportunity of expressing her appreciation of the work of the officers connected with it. Those whom she met appeared to her to be splendid men and devoted to duty.

The Nursing Sisters, with the exception of a few black sheep, seemed to her also hard-working and conscientious, but she appears to have been very much struck by their cramped outlook on life. "I do not refer," she said, "principally to a lack of general education, though this was very evident in some instances; but so many seemed to take absolutely no interest in public or professional affairs, and to have no knowledge of them. I have often wondered why British women at home had not before this obtained the Parliamentary franchise, but I wonder no longer after meeting your Nursing Sisters—good women and true, many of them, but absolutely lacking a grip of the realities. But then, again, one realises the difference in the position of the average woman in England and the Colonies; after coming to the mother country I comprehend the atmosphere in which these Sisters have grown up, and it explains many things to me. It seems to me the very air breathes a worship of wealth, and those, more especially women, who do not possess it are of little account. Everything seems overcrowded, cramped; there is no room to spread one's wings as in the Colonies. With us wealth is of little importance, but one must have individuality unless one is to be a nonentity. People are accepted on their own merits, and initiative and capacity are appreciated and cherished. It seems to me our standards are truer than yours."

To return, however, to South African Army Nursing. With regard to the work of the orderlies, Miss Speed formed the opinion that the way in which it was performed depended greatly upon the

Sister of the ward. If the Sister did her duty, the men followed suit. In fact, the good or bad nursing of the patients depended on the example of the Sisters, just as it does in a civil hospital.

I found that Miss Speed's principal object in coming to England at the close of the war was to obtain information as to the re-organised Military Nursing Service before returning to New Zealand, in the hope of carrying out her patriotic idea of forming a Volunteer Nursing Corps. "I had heard," she said, "that the new Service was to be named 'Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service,' and I wanted to understand how it would be organised from an Imperial standpoint. I want to obtain some practical experience of its working, so that I may be able to explain in New Zealand what is required of military nurses. In the event of another war, it would help so much if our nurses knew something of military routine, for there is necessarily much in the system in which it differs from that of a civil hospital, and it would certainly add to the efficiency and usefulness of Colonial military nurses if they were acquainted with these details instead of having to pick them up during the stress of active work. I am rather disappointed that I have not found much appreciation of what I may call the Imperial idea amongst the working women of this country, but I may say that on arriving at Southampton I received amongst my disembarking papers an order signed by the Embarkation Officer as follows:—

" 'Nursing Sisters of the Army Nursing Service Reserve, or of Colonial Nursing Service, who may be desirous of becoming members of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service are notified that application should be made to the Matron-in-Chief, Miss S. J. Browne, Horse Guards, Whitehall, who will be pleased to see them at her office should they find it convenient to call.' "

"I understand, however, that at present military nursing is in a transition stage—the regulations governing Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service are not yet issued—and that one would not derive the greatest advantage from entering a military hospital at the present juncture. I am, therefore, anxiously awaiting the new regulations to learn what provision has been made for the Imperial aspect of the new Service. As a registered Colonial nurse, whose qualifications are recognised by the Legislature of my country, I should, of course, like to see carefully-selected nurses from New Zealand appointed as members of the Service."

One cannot but admire the patriotism and desire for Imperial unity in the Imperial Military Nursing Service which has inspired this lady to travel thousands of miles in order to further the Imperial idea. It is interesting to learn her views, as a Colonial, from this standpoint.

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