

Council on "The Necessity for a Government Department in all Government Offices dealing with the Nursing of the Sick."

In 1901 the Matrons' Council again approached the Secretary of State for War (then the Right Hon. St. John Brodrick), who acceded to their request, and a deputation was accorded a courteous hearing at the War Office on April 2nd, when Miss Isla Stewart, the President, read and presented a Memorandum, which had been drawn up by a Sub-Committee consisting of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Stewart and Miss M. Breay, embodying the views of the Council on Army Nursing Reform. The most important suggestion made was that of "the need of the formation of a Nursing Department in affiliation with the Medical Department at the War Office, superintended by a fully trained and experienced nursing officer." This suggestion, as well as the majority of those made by the Matrons' Council, were subsequently incorporated in the report presented by the committee appointed to consider the reorganisation of the Army Nursing Service.

Meanwhile, in July, 1900, Mr. Burdett Coutts, M.P., who had visited the seat of war in South Africa, wrote a letter to the *Times* on the condition of the wounded at the front which throughout the length and breadth of the land caused a wave of indignation.

In the nursing world it was rightly felt that had the request of Members of Parliament for an inquiry into the whole nursing question been acceded to in 1898, that the Army Nursing Service would have been then overhauled and its obsolete organisation swept away.

Mr. Burdett Coutts followed up his letter to the *Times* by a book, "Lest We Forget," which was widely read, containing a detailed account of the condition of things at the seat of war in regard to the sick and wounded.

Public opinion demanded that the whole question should be investigated, and a Committee was appointed to consider the reorganisation of the Army Medical Department, which included the Army Nursing Service.

It must not be supposed that the Sisters of the Army Nursing Service were not working heroically in South Africa, but they could not do impossibilities, and the home organisation was hopelessly antiquated and inadequate. The number of Sisters allotted to each hospital at the beginning of the war was far too few, the Army Medical Department being clearly not in sympathy with the employment of women nurses to any great extent.

At the end of September, 1901, the Committee appointed presented its Report, which incorporated the majority of the principles urged upon the War Office by the Matrons'

Council, including professional oversight, systematic inspection and increased remuneration of the members of the Service. It recommended the re-organisation of the Army and Indian Army Nursing Services in a new Service, to be termed Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, of which the Queen should be President, and of which a Matron-in-Chief should be appointed, the appointment of a Nursing Board to control the Service, on which three Matrons of large civil hospitals should have seats as well as the Matron-in-Chief. The Matron-in-Chief was also given a seat on the Advisory Board of the Army Medical Service, acting as a member of the Board whenever matters concerning the Nursing Service are under discussion. Subsequently the Indian Army Nursing Service was left out of the scheme, and the civil Matrons on the Committee were reduced to two.

The members of the Matrons' Council had thus the satisfaction of seeing the scheme which it had urged for the benefit of the sick soldier substantially adopted, and on March 27th, 1902, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service was established by Royal Warrant, with Miss Sidney J. Browne, R.R.C., as Matron-in-Chief. (It must be noted that the title Imperial Military Nursing Service was first suggested in a brilliant article in the *Morning Post* by Miss Annesley Kenealy, a trained nurse.) With the appointment of the Matron-in-Chief the War Office, for the first time in the history of Army Nursing, recognised the principle that the official head of the Service should be a trained nurse, and that her advice was essential to the well-being of the Service. It is greatly to be regretted that by her retirement next April the country will lose Miss Browne's most able services. We hope whoever is appointed as her successor will possess those forceful qualities, courage, kindness, and sound common sense which have made her work so successful. During her term of office much has been accomplished for the well-being of the Service, notably an excellent scheme of instruction for the hospital orderlies who are now to have a thorough and systematic course of three years' training. The salaries of nurses of all grades have also been substantially raised.

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The following nurses holding the certificate of the hospital have been elected members of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses:—Mrs. Agnes Isabel Griffiths (*née* Tracey), Miss Dorothea Bell, Miss Annie N. Lee, Miss Millicent Eley, Miss Gertrude Pickman.

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