

Nurses of Note.

THE NEW MATRON-IN-CHIEF.

Miss C. H. Keer, R.R.C., who until recently has held the position of Principal Matron in South Africa in Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, has now returned to England, in order to take up the most desirable position in the nursing world which this, or probably any other country, has to offer, that of Matron-in-Chief of the Military Nursing Service. Miss Keer has many qualifications for the high office to which she has been appointed. Her quiet, modest confidence, confidence evidently born of knowledge, cannot fail to beget the conviction that the choice which placed the reins of government in this important position in her hands was a wise one, and that she will maintain the dignity and prestige which the Service has acquired during the tenure of office of the present Matron-in-Chief, Miss Sidney Browne, R.R.C.

It is unquestionable that the Army Nursing Service as constituted until 1902 was not popular with nurses. But with the advent of the Matron-in-Chief to her official position at the War Office, and under her wise rule positions in the Military Nursing Service are now eagerly sought after, and it can consequently secure the services of the very best nurses. Miss Keer, therefore, assumes office under very favourable conditions.

Not the least of the qualifications of the new Matron-in-Chief is her wide knowledge of the world. The daughter of an English officer in the Indian Service, she was born in India, and came home to school in England. She speaks of her school days as very happy ones, so much so that at their conclusion, having no home in England, she made the school (which was at Malvern) her home until the return of her father, when she went with him to Canada.

There her attention was directed by a Sister who was studying music in Boston, to the facilities for training offered by the Boston City Hospital, and it was there that she received her nursing education, under the present Superintendent of Nurses, Miss Drown.

The Boston City Hospital is recognised as one of the most efficient nursing schools in the United States, and the Surgical Clinique, nursing curriculum, discipline and efficiency are second to none in any hospital in the world. Attached to it is the most magnificent Nurses' Home in the United States, the Vose Memorial House.

On her return to England she entered the Army Nursing Service in 1887, and the

following year was ordered to Egypt, where she remained until 1894. After that she returned to England and was stationed at Dover until 1899, when early in the Boer War she was ordered to South Africa, where she worked on the Natal side. At the conclusion of the war, she returned to England, and for her work during the campaign was awarded the two South African medals and the Royal Red Cross. She was then stationed at Colchester, and while there joined, on its formation, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. In June, 1903, she was chosen as Principal Matron, and returned to South Africa, where she was stationed, in connection with the Head Quarters' Staff, at Pretoria.

The duties of the office of Principal Matron of Q.A.I.M.N.S. in South Africa include the general supervision and inspection of all military hospitals in the country. At first there were 14 of these, exclusive of the hospitals for women and children. Now there are eight. The organisation of hospitals for women and children in all military stations where there were women needing nurses also devolved upon Miss Keer. Nurses for these hospitals were engaged as Reserve Nurses. Miss Keer experienced no difficulty in obtaining applicants for these positions in South Africa. Originally eight of these hospitals were established, but, as the health of the troops became better three were closed, and there are now five hospitals for women and children, and three district nurses are employed who work where and as required.

A Reserve of Nurses is always maintained at Pretoria, to meet emergencies. These are civilian nurses, engaged by the Army, who have the same pay and allowances as the regular Sisters and Staff Nurses in the Service, but there are certain privileges which they do not get. The pay is excellent, indeed throughout the Military Nursing Service the pay now compares favourably with that in any other branch of nursing.

It will thus be seen that Miss Keer has had a varied nursing career, including experience of active service and of organisation under difficult conditions, which will be of great assistance to her in the work of her present office.

We offer our congratulations to Miss Keer upon her well-deserved promotion, and feel sure that under her rule we shall have to record the same continued efficiency and progress in the Military Nursing Service which have been characteristic of the term of office of her distinguished predecessor, which, to the great regret of the nursing world, terminates on April 4th.

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