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Editorial.

THE NURSING IN MILITARY FAMILIES' HOSPITALS.

A branch of the work of the War Office, with which a good many nurses are unacquainted, is the provision and staffing of Military Families' Hospitals in the chief depôts and garrisons. Formerly these were nursed, as a rule, by the wives of soldiers, but during the term of office of Miss C. H. Keer, Matron-in-Chief of Q.A.I.M.N.S., the nursing has been reorganised, and staffs of thoroughly trained nurses are now provided.

Stations at which such hospitals are provided are Aldershot, Chatham, Devonport, Portsmouth, Tidworth, Bulford, Shoeburyness and Cairo, and four of these are recognised as institutions in which pupil midwives may be trained under the rules of the Central Midwives' Board. They thus fulfil a double purpose—i.e., to provide skilled midwifery and nursing care for soldiers' wives in their confinement, and to serve as educational centres (for training in midwifery) for trained nurses. It is an excellent piece of work to have achieved and one which Miss Keer may look back upon with sincere satisfaction.

The Regulations for the Nursing Staff of the Military Families' Hospitals provide for two grades of nurses: (1) head nurses and (2) nurses. All candidates for appointment must possess a certificate of not less than three years' training and service in medical and surgical nursing in a civil hospital, and the certificate of the Central Midwives' Board—thus a high standard is for the future to be maintained in these hospitals. Candidates before appointment are required to produce the necessary certificates and have to attend before a sub-committee of

the Nursing Board, who make recommendations as to their appointment. Arrangements are also made for their physical examination at the War Office. Head nurses are, as far as possible, appointed from the rank of nurses in Military Families' Hospitals, so that there is a prospect of promotion for those who begin as nurses, added to which they are eligible for grants of pensions and gratuities after ten years' service, so that the posts in these hospitals afford an opening which may with advantage be considered by nurses holding the necessary qualifications. The initial rate of pay for nurses is £35 per annum, which is increased £2 annually to a maximum of £45. There is also an allowance of £5 for uniform, and a weekly allowance at home of 15s. a week for board and washing, and abroad of 21s., reduced to 3s. 6d. when free messing is provided. The pay of Head Nurses is as follows: at Aldershot the initial rate is £73 per annum, rising to £83; and at other stations £55, rising to £65.

Pensions are calculated on the rate of pay at the time of retirement, nurses not being retained after sixty years of age. After ten years' service they are 30 per cent. of such pay, rising 2 per cent. each year up to a maximum of 70 per cent. In case of special devotion to duty a pension not exceeding £50 a year may be granted should the rate for which the Head Nurse or nurse is normally qualified be less than the amount.

It must be understood that the nurses employed in these hospitals are not members of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, but are engaged by the Nursing Board of the Service under regulations issued with Army Orders dated December 1st, 1909. We commend this branch to the notice of nurses as affording a useful and congenial sphere of work.

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