

### A DOMESTIC AFFAIR.

It will be within the recollection of our readers that before leaving London to take up her new office as Matron of the Hôpital Militaire Anglais at Nevers, Miss Florence Tubbs sent a letter to Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, petitioning for a thorough investigation into the circumstances of her summary discharge by the Committee of the Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers.

We are now requested to publish her letter and the reply thereto received from the War Office.

87, LEITH MANSIONS,  
MAIDA VALE, LONDON, W.  
25th October, 1915.

To Field Marshal the Right Hon. Earl Kitchener  
of Khartoum, K.G., K.P., G.C.B., O.M.,  
Secretary of State for War.

MY LORD,—I beg to enclose herewith a copy of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING containing a full report of the circumstances connected with my dismissal from the position of Matron of the Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers.

I beg to enter a formal protest against the manner of my dismissal, without enquiry or investigation, and to point out that this took place in a military auxiliary hospital, which is presumably under the authority of the War Office, which has led trained nurses employed there to believe they were under its protection.

In this connection I may draw attention to the fact that the War Office has found it necessary both for the regular Military and Territorial Force Nursing Services, to appoint Advisory Nursing Boards on which the Nursing Profession is represented by experienced Matrons—who advise the War Office on professional questions connected therewith; but, in connection with the large number of nurses working in Military Auxiliary Hospitals, there is no such professional authority to which they can refer questions of difficulty, or injustice, and which, in its turn, would be able to advise the War Office.

I beg most respectfully to submit to your Lordship that when the Matron of a Military Auxiliary Hospital, with a record of 20 years' honourable professional service, is summarily dismissed, by a committee formed of half a dozen people, who know nothing of professional nursing, and is directed to leave the institution, she should have the right to an independent investigation on the part of the War Office. Had I consented to be thus summarily ejected, at a few hours' notice, my personal and professional reputation, and with them my power of self-support, would have been irretrievably damaged.

I beg further to direct your Lordship's attention to the letter signed by all the officers who were patients in the Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers at the time, and to the fact that owing

to the circumstances of my dismissal all the Senior Sisters, and the large majority of the nursing and domestic staff, resigned as a protest against the arbitrary and unjustifiable treatment to which I was subjected, and the Commandant of the Voluntary Aid Detachment working in the Hospital withdrew all its members.

I beg in conclusion to claim respectfully:—

1. That in hospitals subsidized by a State Department the Staffs of such hospitals are entitled to the right of appeal to that Department.

2. That it is incumbent upon the War Office to see that the trained nurses in military auxiliary hospitals are justly treated, and

3. That no nurse should be summarily discharged by lay committees, or any other authority, without being informed in writing of the accusations against her, and having an opportunity of meeting them.

I respectfully draw your Lordship's attention to the procedure adopted by the Local Government Board, under which Boards of Guardians have no power to remove the higher officials in Poor Law Infirmaries. Such officials have the right of appeal to the Local Government Board and to an independent enquiry. I am of opinion that the same measure of justice should be accorded to me.

I am,

My Lord,

Your obedient servant,

FLORENCE TUBBS

(late Matron of the Endsleigh  
Palace Hospital for Officers).

War Office,

Nov. 9th, 1915.

DEAR MADAM,—I have received your letter of October 25th, enclosing a copy of a letter which you sent to the Secretary of State for War. The matter in question is really a domestic affair between the Committee and yourself, and as the Committee are opposed to any enquiry, I regret that we cannot interfere in the matter. I should point out that there has been no reflection on your character from first to last.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) H. J. TENNANT.

To Miss Florence Tubbs.

We are not surprised to learn that the Committee, of which Sir Archibald Williamson, M.P., is Chairman, and his wife Hon. Secretary, are "opposed to any enquiry," as their conduct throughout has, in our opinion, been quite indefensible, and we still contest the assumption of the War Office that the treatment of its officials by persons forming committees of military auxiliary hospitals, recognised by this State Department, is a "domestic affair." It is no such thing. The Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers is not a charitable institution; the whole building was comman-

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