

We contend that it is an outrage to patriotism that sick soldiers should be made objects of charity. It is the duty of the State to provide and pay for the care of the Nation's soldiers in sickness as well as in health.

The outcome of this suggestion, in the present War, has been that a large number of private hospitals have sprung into existence, promoted no doubt by the kindest intentions, but usually by persons totally ignorant of hospital management, which is a highly specialised branch of public service.

Wealthy women with social influence have in many instances adapted houses as hospitals. At the same time they have assumed the professional titles of Lady Superintendent and Matron, and, also, the distinctive uniform of the trained nurse. With very little knowledge of professional qualifications they may, or may not, have selected a sufficient and competent staff of trained nurses, whose anomalous position is at once apparent to the professional mind. To accept service under these conditions makes it, in our opinion, exceedingly difficult for such nurses to exercise sufficient authority to maintain discipline, and, in consequence, high standards of nursing.

Private hospitals so organized are operating at home and abroad, and in our opinion such untrained women, with the best intentions in the world, have no more right to assume our professional titles, and wear our professional uniform, than unqualified men would have to dominate the medical departments in these institutions. The contention that because a woman belongs to the aristocracy of rank or wealth she is endowed with a birthright of professional knowledge is a pernicious theory against which we trained nurses must be permitted to protest. Such a supposition is treating our skilled work with contempt.

As hostesses, welcoming our sick and wounded soldiers as honoured guests, these ladies fulfil a gracious function; as Lady Superintendents, Matrons, and Supervisors of Trained Nursing, masquerading in the garb of the professional nurse, they are as inadmissible as they are ridiculous.

V.—PROFESSIONAL UNIFORM.

In this connection another result of excluding professional opinion in the organization of the British Red Cross Society, was the adoption by the Uniform Sub-Committee (composed of two peeresses, one peer, and a medical practitioner) of trained nurses' uniform in its entirety, for members of Voluntary Aid Detachments, not only when on duty as nurses, in the wards, but when employed as orderlies, cooks, hall porters, and in other domestic avocations.

VI.—DANGER OF DIRT.

To substitute inexperienced members of Voluntary Aid Detachments for experienced domestic workers in voluntary hospitals is not without risk. The majority of these women are unused to hard domestic labour, and without such labour a safe standard of cleanliness cannot be maintained in any department of these institutions.

In this connection we would draw attention to the fact incorporated in the statements *re* S——— (Appendix 1), C——— (Appendix 2), and in a letter quoted in Appendix 4, that scarlet fever, septic throats, and diphtheria are reported to have developed respectively in the institutions criticised.

VII.—UNTRAINED NURSES AT THE FRONT.

No sooner was war declared in August, 1914, than hundreds of women of all ages offered themselves for a few weeks' training in hospitals, and contrary to the best interests of the sick and the nursing profession, hundreds of them were, and are being, received into the wards of even our best training schools, and after two or three weeks' experience are free to wear nurses' uniform, and attend on the wounded in various capacities at home and abroad. A College of Ambulance was also opened in September, in Vere Street, London, W., to train women and grant Certificates of Proficiency in Nursing after a few weeks' instruction.

The disputed question of whether or no untrained women have proceeded to the Front to attend the wounded can no longer be denied (Appendix 5)

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