

### NURSING AND THE WAR.

It is proposed that an Empire War Memorial Shrine and Cloisters, in the form of a Greek Cross, shall be erected in Old Palace Yard. We hope one of the '78 recesses to be used as small memorial chapels will commemorate trained nurses.

The Brussels correspondent of the *Times* writes from that city, on December 10th:—"The site of Nurse Cavell's grave in the Tir National seems, now to be established with sufficient certainty judging by the German plan of the cemetery shown to me there by the Belgian authorities.

"The first occasion was taken this afternoon by the British community to hold a commemoration service at the grave, conducted by the Rev. H. S. T. Gahan and attended by the British Minister, Sir F. H. Villiers, who laid a wreath from King George and Queen Mary, inscribed in memory of 'A brave and splendid Englishwoman.' Sir F. H. Villiers also deposited a wreath, likewise bound with the British colours, in the name of the British Legation and colony, to which the American Minister, Mr. Brand Whitlock, who was present, added a tribute of his own. In spite of a steady downpour, a large company did not shrink from the slippery, muddy walk across the wind-swept butts to the graveside. In addition to Lady Villiers and the members of the Legation staff and their ladies, those present included the Earl of Athlone, the Spanish Minister, and the Belgian Foreign Minister and Mme. Hymans.

"Among King Albert's first acts after his re-entry into Brussels was to visit, in company with his Queen, the Martyrs' Cemetery, where the latter laid a wreath, 'To Edith Cavell.—*Elisabeth.*'"

A general evacuation of British sick and wounded from Belgium and France, has been ordered, and is going on now. Of course, some cases cannot be moved, but most of the hospital staffs and women in the nursing services will come home. The demobilisation of nurses and V.A.D.s at home is also beginning to make the former consider their future. The past four years have been very strenuous, and the majority of war nurses mean to have "a nice long rest." This is wise; they will thus begin a new "administration" refreshed and fit.

It must not be forgotten, however, that during the past four years, the training schools have certificated hundreds of young, up-to-date nurses, and many a post resigned is not now vacant. There is plenty of good work waiting to be done in private nursing, which, we fear, "war" nurses will not find to their taste after all the change and excitement. We believe the Overseas Nursing Association has vacancies abroad in our Crown Colonies for well-trained general nurses holding also the C.M.B. certificate, and information as to future spheres of work can be obtained at the office of the National Union of Trained Nurses'

Employment Bureau, at 46, Marsham Street, Westminster. There will also be every effort made to help nurses in every particular at the new Scottish Nurses' Club, 205, Bath Street, Glasgow. In Dublin, the nurses have their professional centre at 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

Last week's *Truth* asks:—

"Why should the Matron-in-Chief of Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service be allowed to hold her appointment for an indefinite period when the Pay Warrant limits the tenure of her office to a maximum of five years? My War Office friends will, of course, tell me that the lady in question is highly qualified for her position, and from what I hear outside the War Office this is undoubtedly the case. None the less rules are made for observance, and, as the Matron-in-Chief has had an eight years' innings, I think the time has come for her to give a step of promotion to the Matrons and Sisters below her. General Goodwin is naturally anxious to have an efficient Matron-in-Chief at the head of the Nursing Service, but there are as good fish in the sea as come out of it.

"Apropos of this matter, I am by no means satisfied with the system, or rather with the want of system, of promotion in the Nursing Service. There is neither a time, nor any other, scale of promotion for the staff nurses and Sisters, who are absolutely at the mercy, tender or otherwise, of the Matron-in-Chief. Male autocrats are bad enough, but when autocratic power is given to female officials, especially when they are strong enough to hold their own, it is hopeless to look for impartiality of judgment. Women are not made that way. I think a Promotion Board should be set up for the Nursing Service, and I am disposed to think that the Director-General or his deputy, should be president of it."

We wonder if *Truth* has seen the offensive "Serf Clause," set up during the war, and without subscribing to which Sisters and nurses of the Military Nursing Service Reserve are not eligible for the £20 rise in salary. It is easy to exercise "autocratic power" with such a provision, and we demand once more that our Military Nursing Services shall be freed from the taint of tyranny and the Clause abrogated.

The members of the Nursing Board, as well as the Matron-in-Chief, are to blame for thrusting this ignoble system upon Sisters and nurses, during a war, when they must submit to it or fail to care for our devoted troops in their urgent need. To bleat about fighting for freedom and liberty and the "rights of man," and to permit this despotic system to continue at the War Office gives cause for the accusation of our enemies that we are a nation of hypocrites.

We hope *Truth* will look into this matter and help to have this injustice rectified.

### TRUE TALES WITH A MORAL. 1930.

*Another little Grand-daughter*: What did you do in the Great War, Grannie?

*Grannie* (bridling): I appeared constantly in the pictorial Press in Nurses' uniform. Sweet studies."

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