

anonymous correspondent the courtesy and justice to insert this reply to your editorial notes on my last letter. Had I been on the Yeomanry Hospital Committee I should have considered that I had a great deal to do with the hospital's equipment, and, therefore, think that greater care should have been taken to verify my statements than only trusting to newspaper reports.

1. I *am* not and never *have* been on the Yeomanry Hospital Committee, nor have I been instrumental in recommending a single nurse for employment in South Africa.

2. I consider that the course adopted by myself for my own Cottage Hospital *is* analogous to the subject which we are discussing. The War Office was unprepared for the war and therefore has been compelled to send out the Yeomanry, which is a body of men originally intended for home defence. There was no provision therefore for supplying them with Hospital accommodation abroad, and in this emergency, "society women" have come forward to do their best to supply the deficiency, and presumably when people subscribe money in answer to an appeal from *them*, they do it or ought to have done it, because they have satisfied themselves that the money will be well spent.

3. In my letter I mentioned "certificates from well known medical men and matrons," I note that in your reply you omit the word "matrons." Do you wish to infer that the certificates of "well known medical men and matrons" are unreliable? If so the sick and wounded and "Society women" are indeed in an unfortunate position, but in that case, would matters be improved if these same men and women had the management of the committees? I observe that you allow to appear without comment a letter from "A Sister in a London Hospital," who implies that Matrons are *not* expected to write "all truths" when committees of unprofessional persons apply to them for information about a nurse; but I am aware that you are not responsible for the opinions of your correspondents, and only think that the letter of this disloyal Sister deserved comment as much as my own.

4. When the war is over then will be the time to say whether the nurses selected have proved inefficient.

5. The word "best" in my letter has been omitted in your reply. I had inserted it intentionally.

6. I believe that as far as the nursing of our regular Army is concerned, the War Office was prepared with a sufficiency of nurses in the Army Reserve. If it was not, I am quite of your opinion that in times of peace it should maintain an adequate supply of nurses in the Reserve who have been trained and found efficient and reliable, if not in a military hospital at least in a large hospital where adult males have formed a large proportion of their cases.

For the rest kindly see my reply to your second note. Apologising for the length of my letter.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

A SOCIETY WOMAN.

[It will be remembered that in recent issues we have considered it our duty to criticise the wisdom and the right of the Yeomanry Hospital Committee to assume the professional responsibility of selecting trained nurses for active service in South Africa without the expert help of some of the superintendents of our training schools, just for the same reasons as these ladies would fail in their public duty had they taken upon themselves to

interview and select the medical staff without the aid of registered medical practitioners. This opinion gave great umbrage to some of the "Society women" on the Committee, and their representative, Mme. Van André, refused to give any information on nursing matters to our most courteous representative, stating "we do not want the Matrons." We therefore called for the publication of the names and *qualifications* of the nurses chosen by the Committee. The names have been given to the press, but so far the *qualifications* have been withheld. In answer to our remarks we received a letter from a lady of title, whose name has appeared on several occasions in print as a member of the Yeomanry Committee, criticising our remarks and, in fact, assuming a brief for the Committee. Under these circumstances we cannot be blamed for the error of concluding that she *was* a member of the Committee.

2. We have expressed the opinion that the ladies who formed themselves into a committee to supplement the deficiencies of the War Office, in providing hospital accommodation for the Yeomanry Corps, were right in so doing. The incomes of their husbands as landed proprietors are largely supplied by the class of men—yeomen farmers, who are their tenants, and of whom this corps is composed. Indeed, we will go further, and say it was their *duty* to help to make provision for these brave men. But we repeat and maintain our contention that they were acting most unwisely in assuming the selection of professional nurses without professional aid; and the confusion of issues is amply proved by the fact that they have selected their chief executive nursing officers from women holding a *one year's certificate of training as lady pupils*, and, placed under the control and direction of these ladies, women who have passed through a complete three years' efficient curriculum of training, and who hold three years' certificates of efficiency! We enquire how is professional discipline to be maintained under such a system? As well place an L.S.A. over men who possess the professional qualifications of F.R.C.P. or F.R.C.S.!

3. Our correspondent asks "Do you wish to infer that the certificates of well known medical men and matrons are unreliable? We never infer anything. We state with no fear of contradiction that many testimonials written by medical men for nurses, are not worth the paper they appear on, and in our best training schools, the medical staff are declining to "give testimonials" and are wisely content that the Committee and Matron should be referred to, and held responsible for recommending members of the nursing staff. We are of opinion that matrons are usually very conscientious in recommending their nurses, and it is this honesty which presumably called forth the objection upon the part of our correspondent to ask the advice "of a possibly prejudiced matron"! Mrs. Van André's opinion expressed on one occasion to our representative that because they had the help of a surgeon on the Committee to select the nursing staff, they did not need that of a matron, proves our statement that "some society women" have failed to realize that the associated professions of medicine and nursing have distinct places and duties in the body politic, and moreover that the *economic independence* the one of the other is absolutely essential in the interest of the public. We cannot condemn the opinions of "A Sister in a London Hospital" as "disloyal." She claimed in her letter that the Matron, not having been asked in confidence for

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)