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EDITORIAL.

THE CALL OF DUTY.

If there is one person to-day whom the nursing profession has cause to envy, and cause to thank, it is Miss Alt, a mission nurse, who, as reported by Reuter's special war correspondent, is working in the cholera hospital at San Stefano; for British Nurses—on account of the apathy of the British Red Cross Society, where thoroughly trained nursing is concerned—are envious of the opportunity seized by Miss Alt, and grateful to her that, having the opportunity, she has followed her professional instinct to respond to the call of suffering which no true nurse can hear unmoved, and is demonstrating to the world that, given the opportunity, nurses are faithful to the voice of duty.

But no such result of her faithfulness could have been anticipated by Miss Alt, when she quietly took up her solitary post amongst the stricken patients of the cholera camp. The story now made public is that two Englishmen who visited the San Stefano camp, with the object of seeing what relief work was possible, found an old lady working amongst the soldiers. This was Miss Alt, a nurse who was sent out by Lady Dufferin many years ago when she desired to provide skilled nursing help for Turkish mothers. The scheme did not take root as it has done in India, but Miss Alt remained abroad, became a governess in Turkish families, and was employed in this capacity at San Stefano when the cholera camp was established there. Unaided by any other European, and without asking for any other foreign aid, she took up the work, and is spending the money she has earned, on the patients whom she is nursing.

The United States Ambassador, so the story runs, is offering a large part of the American Red Cross Fund intrusted to him for the organization of this cholera camp,

and the Secretary of the Embassy, Mr. Hoffman Philip, failing to secure a Red Crescent worker, has assumed the direction of the camp himself.

The Greek school at San Stefano has been taken as a hospital. It can accommodate a few hundred men, but, it is stated, that as practically no sanitary precautions have been taken, the place will immediately become pestilential, and it will be almost certain death for those who enter it.

It is in this hospital that Miss Alt is working, and, though we are sure she would be the last to desire applause for doing her duty, surely her heroism is of a quality to compare with that of the bravest men who, on the field of battle, perform deeds of valour which earn the Victoria Cross.

The stimulus of comradeship, and the excitement of the moment, are aids to the bravest which they would be the first to acknowledge. Even they might shrink from the self-imposed task of the solitary woman, who passes days and nights in the companionship of the dead and dying cholera patients, faithfully giving them such attention and alleviation as she is able to bestow. Is it possible that in the face of Monday's news the monotonous response can still be received from the British Red Cross Society in reply to enquiry as to whether nurses are being despatched, "We are not sending out women nurses"? It is even so. All honour to this brave Swiss woman, who, when our countrymen keep at home the nurses who might help her, and repudiate responsibility for any nurse going on her own account, quietly faces overwhelming odds, and places her skill, her means, her life at the disposal of the sick.

We are glad to learn from a later telegram from the same source that a Hungarian lady and a Scottish clergyman, the Rev. Robert Frew, have now joined Miss Alt.

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