

NURSING AND THE WAR.

The following are the channels through which nurses have been able to take part in Army nursing:—Through Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, at work in time of peace; through the Reserve of that Service—it is formed principally of trained nurses from general hospitals, which guarantee to provide so many nurses for active service in time of war—a retaining fee being paid, also all expenses when the nurses are called up. The Imperial Naval Nursing Service is organised on much the same system. These nurses work in Naval hospitals and on Hospital Ships. There is no individuality about these Reserves, as the nurses are selected and sent on duty as required without previous experience of Naval or Military nursing. The Territorial Force Nursing Service is organised in time of peace for service in time of war. Each Principal Matron, Matron, Sister or nurse is a personal volunteer, and there should thus exist a strong sense of *esprit de corps* throughout this Service.

The two responsible bodies which have power to select and send nurses on active duty are the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England, and the British Red Cross Society.

Then there are the voluntary hospitals supported by rich sections of the public, who select their own staffs. We are of opinion that these "pirates," as they have been called, seldom realise the importance of efficient nursing. Thus through the agency of some of them many persons are sent to the front who would be much better left at home. For instance, by more than one, to whom a number of thoroughly trained nurses offered service, they have been refused, and a probationer from a London hospital sent out, "because her people are paying a guinea a week for her"! Also women who have not been nursing for years, and who have been recently engaged in other avocations, are taken as volunteers if they pay their own expenses, and the thoroughly qualified professional woman, who requires a small salary and expenses, is thus superseded in her own skilled work. In this war we are also to have Australian, Canadian, and American Red Cross Hospitals at the front.

Now that so many Sisters have been sent to the Front through the War Office, we feel sure the public would greatly appreciate a few authoritative details concerning them. There is no reason why the names of those selected for active service should not be published, and any other news concerning them which the War Office thinks well to issue. All have anxious friends.

The language difficulty has come home to us very seriously in this war, as a very limited number of nurses have a practical knowledge of any language but English; and unless the hospital is staffed with English doctors, great inconvenience may arise through misunder-

standing directions or patients' needs. To attempt to learn French on the spur of the moment from a few scrappy sentences in books is, in our opinion, perfectly useless.

We suppose it is very little use sounding a note of warning to those nurses going on foreign service, who are apparently deficient in *savoir faire* and instinctive good feeling. The letter in our last issue from Miss Ada Samuda expresses very plainly the feeling of the average English gentlewoman, and it is safe to take such feeling into consideration, and as an example. We devoutly hope our profession is not going to be subjected to the same humiliating experience through which it lost caste so terribly in the South African war. Already we regret to state, it is reported on good authority that an English nurse dined in a public restaurant in Brussels with a German officer, than which nothing could be more shameless and disloyal. Also we know for a fact that a nurse from a much-vaunted leading London hospital dressed herself up in a Greek officer's uniform, much to his amusement, during the recent Balkan war! Such episodes are a disgrace to our cloth, and bring our noble work into contempt. We do implore those who wear our uniform on active service abroad, whether they are trained or not, to render it the respect it deserves. The circum-spection of the religious might well be emulated by the lay community when on active duty.

A Territorial nurse writes: "We had fourteen German wounded prisoners brought in the day before yesterday, all bullet and bayonet wounds. Two speak a little English and French, so we manage to understand them. Later in the day the nurses were forbidden to go into the ward, only male nurses were to be admitted, which meant we had to do orderlies' work. I washed up all day yesterday for about sixty patients. But after all, they found they could not do without us, so we are back in our ward to-day, with a sentry at each end of it and sentries with drawn bayonets outside, which looks very impressive."

At Harlesden Congregational Church on Sunday evening Rev. W. A. Kerr read a letter received from Miss Lucie H. France, a member of the church who is now engaged at the 4th Southern General Hospital, Plymouth. The hospital was an improvised schoolroom which Miss France states was "not spotlessly clean," and the women were all impatient because the cleaning wasn't getting on fast enough. So "we went out one morning and bought scrubbing brushes, house flannels, soap, &c., all kinds of such things, and commenced doing a bit ourselves, and I tell you candidly we didn't half do it. We stuck at nothing except the floors, and, my word, the mud did come off! I'm sure the County Council will be grateful to us when they come into their own again. 'Twill be a healthier place for the kiddies, and no mistake. Our first batch of warriors

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