

The Grosvenor Hospital for Women had consented to receive any sick Sisters on the nursing staff.

After the usual votes of thanks the meeting terminated.

#### UNFAIR TO REGULAR PROBATIONERS.

We are informed that there is a good deal of smouldering dissatisfaction amongst the regular probationers in our larger training schools, especially in Dublin, where monthly paying pupils are being admitted, as they consider the innovation unfair and injurious to their training, for which they have been compelled to contract to give three or four years' hard work. One correspondent points out that this arrangement amounts to a breach of contract upon the part of the Board of Management, and we are inclined to think she would be right; that is to say, if they have made any contract with her, which we venture to doubt.

In this connection the *British Medical Journal* reports that:—

"The request of several of the holders of the certificates of the St. John Ambulance Association and of the Red Cross to be allowed to obtain practical experience in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, has led to a very full and careful consideration of the whole question by the board of management of that institution. The Principal of the Technical Institute of Belfast has also made a similar application on behalf of classes on first aid and nursing which are being held in the institute.

"Great sympathy with the movement is felt by everyone, but it was pointed out that the Royal Victoria Hospital is one of the teaching hospitals in Belfast, and has upward of 150 students in the winter session; in addition there are about 50 probationers. To allow any more raw material in for training would exceed the powers of the responsible heads and tend to lower the standard of attention to the patient. Besides, to allow a number of young women into the hospital in a more or less irresponsible position would put a strain upon its discipline, and these women would when they had obtained their month's or three months' or six months' certificates, in many cases arrogate to themselves the title of sick nurse, and by the public would be looked upon as sick nurses, and so the high standard demanded now by the three years' training would be lowered. Would such a short training really equip a woman for active and responsible duty in a hospital where terrific strain is suddenly thrown upon the officers of all classes, or in the field, where the personal initiative and responsibility is so great?

"But the whole discussion seems to be futile in the light of the declaration of the War Office that they will not send any but fully-trained nurses to the front, and that they have a reserve of some 1,500 of such on their list. The British Red Cross also states that the reserve of fully-trained nurses is large. The board of management of the Royal Victoria Hospital, after a most sympathetic discussion of the matter, announced that on account of the difficulties surrounding the question,

it could not accede to the request, but agreed that, in case the War Office thought that a serious emergency had arisen demanding the engagement of such a type of trained nurse, it would, along with other authorities, accede to the request."

Why if the War Office has really made such a declaration is it being constantly violated? It is an open secret that numbers of women and girls have been running about near the front both in Belgium and in France, wearing trained nurses' uniforms and assuming great responsibility for which they are not trained. We warmly congratulate the Board of Management of the Royal Victoria Hospital at Belfast upon the unimpeachable position it has adopted.

#### A NARROW ESCAPE.

The dangers run by our American colleagues on the *ss. Red Cross* in their journey across the ocean, to care for the sick and wounded of the belligerent nations of Europe, appear almost incredible. One would suppose that a Red Cross ship carrying doctors and nurses would be free from molestation. Yet the *New York American* has published a despatch from Mr. Earle Harrison, its special correspondent in Belgium and Holland, making the incredible statement that the former German crew of the ship, which carried 120 nurses and 40 doctors, had deliberately rendered her unseaworthy, and likely to sink in any kind of rough weather, or be destroyed by fire should the slightest blaze occur, as all her pumps had been practically destroyed.

This grave charge was supported by an affidavit by the engineers, who certified on oath that "the bilges of the *Red Cross* ship, formerly the steamship *Hamburg*, were stuffed with blankets, potato sacks, waste, overalls, china cups, tin platters, old tools of various descriptions, brushes, and other debris in such quantities as to endanger the safety of the ship. . . .

"We also found in the provision room three barrels of debris such as rotten onions, potatoes, cabbage and other food stuff placed there instead of being thrown overboard. We also found in the suction pipe from the provision room a blanket stuffed in the pipe, which prevented us from removing the water from that part of the ship. Forty inches of water had leaked in and accumulated before the obstruction in the pipe was found and removed.

"The German engineers from whom we took over the ship boasted that we would have to put back into New York in three days or less, and that all our meat and supplies would spoil. . . . It was only by the most strenuous exertion on the part of the engineers, which necessitated them being on duty day and night, that we were able to keep the ship afloat."

The First Engineer, in reply to a further question, emphatically declared that "it was nothing short of a criminal effort to prevent the ship from ever reaching port."

Our advice to our American colleagues is that the return journey shall be made on a British ship.

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