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EDITORIAL.

A QUESTION OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO OUR SICK AND WOUNDED.

We have received the following letter from a member of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses :—

"May I as a certificated St. Bartholomew's Hospital nurse, after four years' training and service, draw your attention to the following paragraph which appeared, with a photograph of the lady in question, in the *City Press* on October 24th last. For some weeks past a number of Red Cross girls have been 'learning nursing,' each for a month or so, in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, on the pretext that they were to act merely as probationers under the direction of trained nurses at home. The cutting I enclose discloses their real object. It is most unfair to our probationers, and a scandal that such an inefficient standard of nursing should be offered to our soldiers at the front. Hoping something may be done to wake up the War Office as to its duty in this connection."

The paragraph enclosed runs as follows :—

A RED CROSS NURSE.

"Miss Woodrow (daughter of Mr. T. J. Woodrow, secretary of the City of London Conservative and Unionist Association) left London on Monday for France for immediate service as a Red Cross nurse under the direction of the British War Office. For several years Miss Woodrow has been studying for this kind of work. Since the outbreak of the War she has attended, with the officers of her detachment (No. 146), at Devonshire House, and has gone through a nursing course in the wards of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where she was complimented by the Matron on leaving. Later she spent three weeks in the casualty and surgical ward of St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, having in the interval been inoculated for enteric. She left London for Paris at very short notice, travelling by way of Newhaven and Dieppe. The idea of the Red Cross officials seems to be that rest stations for the wounded shall be arranged at various places near the rear of the Anglo-French

forces, where cases can be temporarily attended to before being transferred to the base hospitals."

The following statements appear in the *British Medical Journal*, dated October 24th :

"Sir Frederick Treves informs us that rumours are abroad that sick and wounded British soldiers are being nursed by unqualified nurses, and he emphatically repeats that no women are engaged by the Red Cross Society as nurses except those who are fully trained hospital nurses with a three years' certificate."

The following letter emphasising this point has been received by the Medical Secretary of the British Medical Association :—

British Red Cross Society,
83, Pall Mall, London, S.W.,

October 19th, 1914.

Sir,—It has been brought to the notice of the Committee of the British Red Cross Society that doctors in various parts of the country are complaining that wounded soldiers are, as they allege, being nursed by members of Voluntary Aid Detachments who are not fully trained and certificated nurses.

On behalf of this Society I desire to point out that no offer of hospital accommodation which has been submitted to us, and has been approved of by the military authorities, is ever accepted unless fully trained and certificated nurses are in charge. In these hospitals the services of Voluntary Aid Detachments are utilised as probationers, cooks, and in other general ways.

If hospitals are started and utilised by the military authorities without reference to this Society, the doctor who is asked to take medical charge should, if he finds lack of skilled nurses, apply to the authority responsible for starting such a hospital.

I may mention that we have upon our books the names of some 1,500 trained and fully certificated nurses whose services could be called upon at any time in case of need, and without expense to the hospitals for which they are required.

I am, yours obediently,

ARTHUR STANLEY,
Chairman of Executive Committee.

We have also received complaints from various sources that both at the Front and at home untrained nurses are nursing our

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