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EDITORIAL.

TINSEL GLORY.

Dr. Albert Wilson, in a letter to the *British Medical Journal*, based on first hand knowledge of the subject of doctors and nurses in France, as he has spent some time at Dieppe at a base hospital, writes, "nurses however capable seem unable to get work. One reason which I have received personally is that the British Red Cross take untrained though influential ladies. This has created a very sore feeling, and naturally so. When I left Dieppe some of the upper ten were busy sifting these rumours, either to discover, or to cover. Considering the vast sums the British Red Cross receives, the matter should not rest where it is. With its worthy past every one wishes well to the British Red Cross, and it would be a disaster if it became the machine of a faction or one route to a tinsel glory."

The question is one which is so urgent, so vital, that it can hardly be emphasised too strongly. Nothing less than the lives of our soldiers, on which depend the integrity of the Empire, are at stake, and the situation is one which demands plain speaking. Fundamentally the British Red Cross Society has never been sympathetic to the work of trained nurses, nor has it organized a well trained body of nurses in time of peace ready for service in war, or given representation to the nursing profession on its Governing Body.

During the present war it is true that numbers of nurses have been hastily enrolled, and sent abroad, but the selection has by no means always resulted in a survival of the fittest, and, though the British Red Cross Society repudiates the charge of having sent any women abroad for nursing duties who do not hold a three years' certificate of training, it is certain that numbers have gone out, presumably for other duties,

wearing the symbol of the Red Cross and the uniform of the trained nurse, who have undertaken the care of the sick and wounded when once abroad. It is also certain that the smaller institutions used for the care of the sick and wounded in this country are flooded with members of Voluntary Aid Detachments, with perhaps one or two trained nurses in charge, and that in consequence the wounded are not receiving the best nursing care possible.

Further it must be said that the "untrained though influential ladies" who hasten to the seat of war are not for the most part those who do serious work for the nation at home in time of peace, but, on the contrary, belong almost exclusively to the smart sporting set, and lest it should be said that we are not speaking sufficiently definitely, in regard to insufficiently trained persons sent on active service in the present war, we may state that a representative of this JOURNAL recently called at the new College of Ambulance in Vere Street, London, W., and made enquiries respecting its scope. She was informed that it was "training people for the front," that the course cost £5 5s., and lasted three weeks, that instruction was given in first aid, home nursing, special bandaging, stretcher drill and loading, and the carrying of stretchers, that its trainees would be "going out with the Red Cross," that some were already working in the base hospitals at Paris, Rouen, Amiens, and Dieppe, and that six had gone to Servia. That ten had been in Ostend with the refugees, and that when the military authorities had turned the Kursaal into a hospital they were sent on to Calais and Paris, where they would nurse the wounded; also ladies who had taken the course were admittedly going with the field ambulances with their own cars, but that over people who paid their own expenses they had no

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