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EDITORIAL.

THE NAVY AND ARMY NURSING SERVICES.

The world moves very slowly on towards perfection, sometimes one is tempted to wonder whether the wave of progress advances or recedes, so now that we are in the midst of the greatest, the most sanguinary war ever known, it is well to consider what are the agents available for the relief of suffering which can be brought to bear for the benefit of those struck down by the forces of destruction.

And when we sum up those agents we at once realize that in regard to the care of the sick and wounded we have made immense advances in the last half century. When Florence Nightingale left these shores on her mission of mercy to our soldiers in the Crimea, she went as an individual who gathered round her such other individuals as seemed most suited for her purpose—there was no Navy or Military Nursing Service on which she could draw for trained nurses, experienced in time of peace in nursing the men of the Sister Services, and of necessity therefore there were no reserves from which these services could be augmented.

To-day we have the Head Sisters, Superintending Sisters, and Nursing Sisters of Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service at work in the Naval Hospitals, and hospital ships, and supplementing them the Reserve Nursing Sisters and the trained men of the Sick Berth Staff.

For the Army there are available in hospitals at home and abroad the services of hundreds of Matrons, Sisters and Nurses, working under the supervision of a Matron-in-Chief at the War Office, who have received a thorough training in large civil hospitals, and after a further period of special training and probation in military

hospitals have received permanent appointments in the Military Nursing Service.

Supplementary to the regular Service there is the Army Nursing Service Reserve, and the male Nursing Orderlies, who, after systematic training and supervision for three years in military hospitals, are certificated as proficient.

Then there is the newest branch in Military Nursing, the Territorial Force Nursing Service. When the appeal was made to the patriotism of nurses to enrol themselves in a Service which could be mobilized, if the need ever arose, for the nursing care of soldiers engaged in home defence, the response was as immediate as it was spontaneous.

A full staff of 120 thoroughly trained nurses of the different grades required was speedily enrolled for each of the 23 hospitals established, and how wise was the provision then made has been demonstrated by the fact that every one of those hospitals has been mobilized, and is now working at its fullest capacity, not primarily for those engaged in home defence, though they also are served, but for the sick and wounded, both British and Belgian, as well as German prisoners, transported to these shores by hospital trains, linked up with hospital ships, so that as quickly as may be they receive the best medical and nursing care available. No doubt within a short time hospital airships will also be pressed into the service of the sick. We have therefore to acknowledge that the progress made in the last five and twenty years has been immense. Associated Services are those organized through the Central British Red Cross Society, and the St. John Ambulance Association, and we may hope that the outcome of the experience of the present war will be the enrolment of a permanent staff of fully trained nurses, under professional control who can be called up for service as, and when required.

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