

NURSING AND THE WAR.

We have received the photograph of a trained nurse who is Lady Superintendent of a Red Cross Hospital, seated in the centre of a group of 27 Voluntary Aid members in full uniform, who are working under her in the hospital as nurses. With facts such as this constantly testified by the unimpeachable evidence of the camera, it is useless to deny that sick and wounded soldiers are being attended by women who are not trained nurses. One Superintendent cannot supervise the work of 27 raw probationers, which is what V.A.D.'s really are.

A writer in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* says:—"Boulogne is one big hospital, all the British wounded are brought here." In one he was told: "We have three young ladies of title here who act as housemaids, they scrub the floors, get up in the early morning and light the fires, and work unceasingly as though they had their livings to earn." Now that the hospital has been taken over by the military authorities, let us hope efficient scrubbers (male or female), will be employed, so that a high standard of cleanliness may be maintained in hospitals abroad. From letters received this is not invariably the case. These excitable society girls had much better remain at home, and their parents pay towards the upkeep of an efficient domestic staff, if they really wish to help the wounded. One nurse writes:—"The mother of my patient expects me to 'maid' her when we come in at night, tired to death. She says 'I dare not bring a maid.'" Of course she wears nurses' uniform. There are plenty of lady's maids in the hotels here. What exceeding folly it all is!

We imagine the newspapers little realise what harm they are doing in extolling the "skilled" services of women as nurses of the wounded who have never been trained. The press is flooded daily with fulsome praise of such dangerous services. The *Manchester Dispatch* tells us that there are women weavers "who are working at the mill every other week, and who devote their time in the alternate weeks in nursing the wounded."

We wonder what these trades union operatives would say if trained nurses did likewise, or what condition the weaving machines would be in if manipulated by hospital nurses! In a sorry mess, we have no doubt. Yet are machines of more account than men? It would appear so. The *Dispatch* continues: "If there is to be any recognition in civil life for those who, whilst not actually fighting, are doing work in connection with the War that is indispensable, voluntary nurses should surely be amongst the first to receive honour. It does not seem a fantastic suggestion that there should be a nursing medal or some other distinction that would indicate national appreciation of very valuable services."

We very sincerely hope that nothing further will be done to encourage untrained women to meddle with our long-suffering soldiers. What the country owes them is the highest nursing skill and the reason they do not invariably get it is because voluntary labour is supposed to be cheap. Let the mill hand stick to her shuttle, and leave the trained nurse in aseptic charge of the sick.

We are glad to learn that Sister Helen Hay (of the American Red Cross Contingent), who has been ill while on duty in Russia, is now well again. From all we hear, the nurses working in Russia have a splendid field for service; indeed, much more than they can possibly cope with—what with hundreds of wounded men, and zymotic diseases resulting from insanitary conditions and the terrible hardships they have to endure.

From Amsterdam comes the following intelligence: In Germany even the hearts of female nurses are under the strictest control of the military authorities. Three nurses who, according to the *Kreuz Zeitung*, fell in love with three wounded French soldiers, were at once dismissed by the military commander at Diedenhofen, who severely reprimanded them, telling them that they were not sufficiently patriotic and were a disgrace to the nursing profession.

How that cherub with the bow and arrows must have smiled! We can imagine him letting fly his darts at the adamant heart of a military commander, and all the consequent confusion!

The first contingent of nurses to leave New South Wales, with the Australian Expeditionary Force, in the *Euripides*, included Miss Gould (Principal Matron), Miss Johnston (Matron), and Sisters Frater, Pocock, Kellett, Marshall, Twyman, and Miss J. Miles Walker. In all, twenty-five nurses accompanied the force now at work in Egypt; and, in addition, four nurses who accompanied Lieut.-Col. Bird, whose services have been accepted by the War Office. It is a wise arrangement that those Australian nurses should be stationed in Egypt instead of coming farther north. The main Hospital Service will include two field ambulances, a clearing hospital, two stationary hospitals, and two general hospitals—making provision, in all, for some 1,800 beds. A number of Army Nursing Sisters will be attached to this Service, under Surgeon-General Williams, Director of Medical Services.

Miss Gould was formerly Matron of the Sydney Hospital, and for some years has worked on the staff of the Public Health Department; and Miss Walker is Matron of the Tasmanian Army Nursing Service. Sister Kellett, whose position is that of Acting Matron at the Sydney Hospital, and Sister Marshall (Theatre Sister), have had leave of absence for as long as they may be serving at the Front; as has also Sister Pocock (Matron of the Gladesville Hospital). We learn from the *Australasian Nurses' Journal* that Matrons will be paid £3 3s. per week; Sisters, £2 2s.; and each nurse

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)