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**EDITORIAL.**

**TEA-TRAYS.**

Our dictionaries define a patriot as "one who loves his country, and is devoted to its interests."

We are all apt to become a little unbalanced just now, with all the talk of patriotism. It is well that we should pause and ask ourselves, if we are true patriots? In other words—are we willing to be used for our country in the way that it most needs us?

Red Cross societies are bombarded with applications from nurses eager to go to the Front.

Often, they have succeeded like the importunate widow, and gone off in triumph regardless of their unsuitability for the work as to health, experience, ignorance of language—regardless also of the obligations they leave behind.

Patriots! Of course they are!

Or take the V.A.D. movement. Who can doubt their patriotism? Who can doubt their enthusiasm for nursing? We heard lately from a V.A.D. with a sense of humour, that in a certain hospital there was much heart-burning amongst herself and her colleagues as to who should take up the solitary tea-tray to a patient.

We observe them up and down the country taking joy rides with their blue-coated charges. Of course this is patriotism! no mistaking it! But we venture to think that some of this energy might be directed into other useful and appropriate channels. Only this week a notice appeared in one of the dailies "that it was resolved at Southampton (presumably a Poor Law Infirmary) to reduce the number of Sisters owing to the shortage of nurses, and to employ patients to nurse those not requiring much active assistance." Poor old things!

There would be scope here for unlimited tea-trays!

Would it not be, a work of the truest patriotism, if the very numerous young women who now crowd the ranks of the V.A.D. were to offer themselves as probationers in Poor Law institutions, to make good the leakage of trained nurses who have gone to the Front?

Think what the ministrations of young, bright, educated girls would mean to that saddest of all classes of sufferers, the chronic invalid. What joy and gladness they could bring to those dull lives if *only* they could be persuaded that the Tommies could spare them.

Or to come back to our trained nurses. What becomes of those whose applications for Red Cross work fill endless waste paper baskets? Is there no other patriotic work open to them?

We understand that some of the poorest districts in London are without nurses. A nurse commenting on this state of affairs, remarked, "I can't sleep for thinking of those poor, neglected people. There are more nurses volunteering for the Front than are needed. I shall go and offer myself to the — Society." There spoke the true patriot. The willingness to help where there is need.

Economics teach us to spend our money in the way that shall do the greatest amount of good to the greatest number of people. Our personal service should be offered on the same principle.

The opportunities of district nursing at this present time cannot be over estimated. The influence for good among women exposed to great temptations during the absence of their husbands—especially with regard to drink—the rearing of infants—the care of sick children whose lives are now so precious to the State; is all patriotic

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)