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EDITORIAL.

ARE V.A.D.S TO BE REGISTERED?

The one burning question which invariably crops up whenever a few trained nurses are gathered together to discuss professional affairs is "Are V.A.D.s to be Registered?" There is not a nurse who has worked in connection with them who does not at once wax eloquent on the subject of V.A.D.s, and the trials she has experienced. Not in relation to individuals, many of whom she recognizes would make capable nurses if trained, though many would be scrapped in their first month's trial, but because the whole organization of this voluntary help is on wrong lines.

The large numbers of young and quite inexperienced girls who have been sent abroad to work in military hospitals, their inflated ideas of their own importance, their unreliability, as they stay off duty on the slightest pretext, the snobbery which declares that the trained nurses, who are paid are there to do the work, and that the V.A.D.'s are to have a good time, although they themselves are highly paid as unskilled workers, all these are grievances which are poured out if any outlet offers.

What trained nurses—who have suffered many things at the hands of V.A.D.s—wish to know is, Are they to be still further confused in the public mind with these immature and untrained workers, by registration by the same authority? Is it even possible that the V.A.D., whose uniform has already received the protection of the State, while every criminal at large may don that of the trained nurse with impunity, will receive further recognition and protection before the trained nurse, who has pleaded—and pleaded in vain—for State registration for the protection of the sick and of her own skilled work for the last quarter of a century? Is it to be bitten into the soul of the highly skilled worker, as with a

corrosive, that the amateur can with ease obtain, through social influence, the recognition denied to her own scientific work for the community?

These are questions that the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., which has assumed the authority to register the V.A.D.s, will have to very carefully consider. A very great responsibility will rest upon that Council, more especially as it has no mandate from the members of the Nursing Profession to define their professional standards, or to exercise authority over them.

It therefore appears to us to be the first duty of the Council of the College to state, in black and white, the conditions under which it proposes to register trained and untrained workers, so that trained nurses, before they put their names on any list, will know under what conditions the Register is to be compiled, and what facilities are to be given to untrained women to compete with them.

Both the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society have their own well-defined constitutions for the organization of their Voluntary Aid Detachments, and there is therefore no excuse whatever for associating any of their members with the highly trained members of the nursing profession. All improvement in the organization of the nursing section, and in the supervision of Red Cross workers, should be undertaken at the end of the war, by the Red Cross Society itself. In this connection we would strongly advise the British Red Cross Society to acquaint itself with the admirable organization of the Nursing Section of the American Red Cross Society, and to adopt the same just and efficient standards for all those entrusted with the care of the sick. The question whether V.A.D.s are to be registered would then automatically disappear, because the American National Committee of the Red

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)