

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

## A FEW HOME TRUTHS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have read the letter by "V.A.D." in the JOURNAL of May 27th, and it would be very amusing and could be treated with contempt were it not that, unfortunately, there are many people at present holding the same views. It would be interesting to know if "V.A.D." had ever taken an interest in the nursing profession or in the patients before she leapt amongst them during the world's great crisis? Are the "V.A.D.s" with us for love of the sick? No; because the sick ones have always been with us; but rather it is because their own men are involved that they answered this call, having lost their companionship and time hanging heavily on their hands. Had "V.A.D." had the good fortune to attend a gathering of representative trained nurses, such as have been received at Buckingham Palace and Marlborough House, she might realise they are not entirely devoid of education and culture and that snobbery, jealousy and insolence are not the characteristics of those who have given up their lives—not during a great and exciting crisis—but have devoted their best energies to following in the footsteps of Florence Nightingale, in helping to alleviate the sufferings of our sick—poor and rich, civilian and military.

I think when the time comes—which, I pray, may be soon—for this terrible carnage to end, the "V.A.D.s" will disappear, with the exception of those who have found their vocation in nursing, and who will then train as we have done, to perfect themselves in their work.

With our recent experiences and looking at conditions from a professional point of view—not necessarily a narrow one—it is our duty to fight against the inclusion in the nursing profession of the untrained, through State registration, if the sick are to be protected, and to obtain the same protection for trained nurses' uniform as has been granted to that of "V.A.D.s"

Yours truly,

Hendon.

L. C. C.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—With reference to the letter on "A Few Home Truths" which appeared in a recent issue, do you think that the lady who wrote the following sentence is in a position to deplore our lack of education?

"If I may say so, what the nursing profession is suffering from is lack of education, and the reason why we V.A.D.s are often preferred by the Doctors, to say nothing of the patients, to

professionals, is that many nurses not having been brought up in refined homes, begin in hospitals to be taught things we have been taught all our lives:—(1) How to associate with men without cringing or familiarity; (2) How to take hold (many of us come from the governing class), and (3) We have good manners, can speak grammatically, many of us are young and good-looking, some have money which smooths the way all the world over; others good social connections; and we have a powerful rich corporation at our backs."

This V.A.D. goes on to tell us that, after only a few weeks' training, she and her friends were commended by the leading Doctors for their skill and success in nursing serious medical and surgical cases. Perhaps if they went to a University they might be commended by the leading Professors for the beauty and refinement of their literary style. This might rouse the jealousy of past and present graduates, people no doubt of "inferior social status!"

May I add that most of the V.A.D.s whom I have met have filled me with respect and admiration and I quite realise that your correspondent's claim to represent the V.A.D.s is quite as vain as her ambition to represent the governing class!

I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully,

A TRAINED NURSE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—As another V.A.D. who also reads THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, may I beg you and your readers not to judge a very large body of women by the impertinent letter of one member.

I hear that the registration of V.A.D.s is much discussed by trained nurses, but, honestly, amongst the V.A.D.s themselves I have never heard it spoken of and I naturally can only speak of those I have met myself, those working in this hospital. I have not met anyone who suggested nursing after the war, except a few who intend to take their training and enter the profession in the usual way.

Your correspondent "M. V. W." raises a question as to our name, V.A.D. May I explain how it is that we hold this title? The Voluntary Aid Detachments of the British Red Cross Society were formed in peace time and each detachment is able to run its own *emergency hospital*. Every ordinary member must hold the First Aid and Home Nursing certificates of the Society. A commandant and quartermaster are appointed; they need not hold any further certificates, although they often have taken the more advanced examinations. Their work is purely administrative. Every detachment must also have a doctor, a trained nurse and a dispenser.

When the War Office began to open large hospitals all over the country they were faced by a difficulty. A civil hospital has its probationers working under a trained staff. A military hospital has its orderlies working under trained

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