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## EDITORIAL.

### THE NEED OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED.

The present urgent need of trained nurses to care for the sick and wounded, who are daily returning to this country, constitutes an irresistible appeal to every member of the nursing profession who is free to offer her services. The men of the British Army have displayed incredible heroism, and cheerfully endured untold suffering in defence of the Empire, and the cause of freedom, and when, acutely ill, they return to this country, it is the duty as well as the privilege of trained nurses to give them the skilled care which it is the bounden duty of the nation to provide.

We know that nurses have been sorely tried during this war, that the terms of employment have been made unnecessarily difficult for them, that thousands who patriotically volunteered their services on the declaration of war were rejected, while untrained persons after a few weeks "training" or—if they had sufficient social influence—with none at all, were permitted to go to the front, that the requirement that if accepted they must serve for the duration of the war deterred many, whose obligations did not permit them to bind themselves for this indefinite period, from offering their services, and that a notice posted in Territorial Hospitals, implying that nurses (whose terms of agreement contained no such provision) who resigned their posts for any reason were in the position of deserters from the Army, created a very bad impression. Nevertheless the need of our wounded soldiers is paramount, and should at this moment supersede all other considerations.

When war was declared, two years ago, there was available to meet the needs of the Army Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, which, with a Matron-

in-Chief at its head, had been re-organised and expanded since the South African War, and its Reserve of fully qualified nurses. This was supplemented by the Territorial Force Nursing Service, of nearly 3,000 thoroughly trained certificated nurses, selected and supervised by a number of very experienced Principal Matrons. This Service, which was organized in order that it might be available in case of the invasion of this country, was at once mobilized; and it is difficult to over-estimate the services it has rendered, or what would have been done had not this fine organization been ready to be called up.

There was no organization of volunteer trained nurses. The British Red Cross Society was the channel through which such voluntary help was to be offered, and though so far back as 1898 the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland had sent a Resolution to the Red Cross Society urging it to form a Corps of Trained Nurses for active service in foreign wars, and similar appeals had been made to it by nurses' organizations on several occasions, they had fallen on deaf ears, and no available Roll of Nurses was in existence on the outbreak of war. Even then much might have been done by systematic organization to remedy this defect.

Recognizing the urgent need, the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland in December, 1914, submitted a Statement drawn up by its President to the Director-General of the Army Medical Service, at the War Office, concluding with the practical suggestion that a Committee, representative of the various Departments engaged in organizing the nursing of sick and wounded soldiers, and including also independent experts on Military Nursing, should be appointed—

1. To enquire into the present conditions of the nursing in Military Auxiliary

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