

NURSING AND THE WAR.

Nursing Sister L. W. Burns, C.A.M.C. (Mrs. George Eedson Burns, of Toronto) is the Permanent Conducting Sister attached to the Canadian Casualty and Discharge Depôt, Prior Park, near Bath. Her duties involve going to Canada with parties of soldiers pronounced to be medically unfit and returning with troops, crossing about twice a month. Mrs. Burns, who has a son an officer in the R.C.E. at Bramshott, Hants, is a graduate of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal, and came to England with the First Canadian Contingent in September, 1914. Since then she has worked in France and in the Canadian hospitals at Taplow and Shorncliffe. She is the wife of Colonel G. E. Burns, of the Canadian Army Guards.

The War Office has through the Red Cross Society issued directions for the use of the Red Cross emblem. Chief constables are to bring to notice any irregular uses, and societies are asked to co-operate in checking irregularities. Women, trained and untrained, are not permitted to adorn themselves with the Red Cross unless they are officially permitted to do so, by the B.R.C.S. We warn trained nurses of this, as we constantly see them wearing a Red Cross stuck in their bonnets, on their bosoms and elsewhere, when they are in no way associated with the Society.

In selecting sisters and nurses in Egypt for service in Mesopotamia only the very strongest were chosen, and a very rigid examination had to be undergone, as the heat and conditions in the East are very trying. Quite a new kit had to be taken, including spine protectors, muslin nets for sandflies, pith helmets, strong boots, cooking utensils and a large supply of face cream and powder—besides other things. The rush of work in Egypt is now over for a time. A Sister writes: "We should like to meet that V.A.D. who has such a sorry opinion of the nursing profession—she would be a wiser woman for the future—not that all trained nurses have behaved here with discretion—or V.A.D.s either. Women somehow seem to let themselves go in foreign lands more

than at home; no real harm is meant, but we cannot be too careful of 'our cloth' at all times, especially when on military service. One thing in 'V.A.D.'s' letter disturbed us 'professionals' here, and that is the suggestion that the London Hospital Matrons are in favour of registration of untrained nurses. Let us hope that wild statement is as imaginative as all the rest of the letter. It must be one thing or the other; we women who have worked hard for the love of our profession and of our kind for three and four years for our certificates will prefer to remain unregistered if we are to be classed with V.A.D.s. It would be most unfair and useless, and we shall not put our names on any register till we know what it means. Not that we wish to deprive

the untrained helpers of credit which is their due, but we prefer not to be classed with them in the public mind. We are members of a skilled profession, and a careful distinction must be made. THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is a perfect godsend out here."

We hear that there is a strong sense of grievance amongst "lady workers" in France at the small number (and those mostly rich and influential titled women) mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's recent despatch. No doubt we shall have much wirepulling for further recognition. The lavish and somewhat indiscriminate manner in which Royal Red Crosses have been scattered around in our home hospitals has also caused much

heartburning. In one hospital two "staffs" have been recommended for this honour and the Sisters upon whom most of the responsibility has fallen have been ignored. We know one Reserve Sister—and there may be many—who worked through the Græco-Turkish War, in the Boer War and the South African War for some years, and has in this war been through the worst in France and the Near East, is always given a responsible charge and is an untiring first-class worker. She holds the Greek Red Cross, but for years of work has had no recognition from our own Fount of All Honour, while amateurs with no training have been awarded the Royal Red Cross, first class. What can be more unfair?



NURSING SISTER L. W. BURNS, C.A.M.C.

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