

## NURSING AND THE WAR.

The nursing staff at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital are, we hear, delighted that their Matron, Miss B. Smale, who is Principal Matron of the 4th Southern General Hospital at Plymouth, has been awarded the Royal Red Cross (First Class) by the King. Miss Smale has been upwards of 15 years Matron at Exeter.

Miss Sinclair, Matron, attached to the 1st Scottish General Hospital, Aberdeen, was also decorated with the R.R.C. First Class. She received her nursing training in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. When the war broke out she was appointed Matron of the 1st Scottish General Hospital, but when the hospital was extended Miss Sinclair was put in charge of the Girls' High School section of the hospital. Staff Nurses Sim, Stuart, Brand, and Mann, all attached to the same hospital, received the R.R.C. (Second Class), so the Aberdeen nurses have done the profession credit.

Miss L. Webster, who was recently decorated by His Majesty the King with the Royal Red Cross, is a member of the Territorial Force Nursing Service, and has done valuable service in nursing sick and wounded soldiers. She is at present at East Leeds War Hospital, and at the outbreak of hostilities was on the staff of the Leeds and Yorkshire Nursing Home. Miss Webster has four brothers with the Colours, and a fifth brother joins this week; so no wonder their mother, a resident of West Bridgford, a charming place on the Trent (well known to us in former happy days), is justly proud of her six children, all serving their country, we feel sure, with patriotic ardour.

Our letter which recently appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on the necessity for reform in Military Auxiliary Hospitals, if a sufficient supply of trained nurses is to be secured, has brought us many interesting letters, all criticising present conditions in V.A.D. hospitals, and asking how better conditions are to be enforced. Our reply to one and all is that we believe the present Secretary of State for War, Mr. Lloyd George,

would insist on reform if the present disorganisation which obtains in many places where soldiers are nursed could be brought to his direct notice. This, however, appears almost impossible under present War Office traditions. We shall await the result of the "Supply of Nurses Committee" report with interest, and hope that a free hand may be given to the Matron members, the majority of whom are members of the War Office Nursing Boards, to evolve a more efficient system of military nursing organisation than they have been able to attain from within its official ring. We regret to hear, however, that these ladies strongly object to fresh blood on the Supply Committee, as they should be the first to realise the right of the workers to express an opinion on their own economic affairs and professional status, especially as the "shortage" is mainly the result of dissatisfaction with a system which is highly distasteful to the rank and file.



MISS L. WEBSTER, R.R.C.

One correspondent, well known in the literary world, writes: "Your able letter in the *Daily Telegraph* this morning is of great importance, and although I am not a trained nurse, I am keenly interested in the question of the management of Military Auxiliary hospitals, some of which are shamefully managed, or rather mismanaged, by the Commandants, who are appointed for the most ridiculous reasons, and which have nothing to do with their ability to manage a hospital. I have been trying to find out if things are in order at one badly managed V.A.D. hospital which I have visited." With

other questions she asks: (1) "Can a maternity nurse with no other qualifications, not even the C.M.B., be Matron of a M.A. Hospital?" Of course she can. Why not, when the laity, including members of the peerage, are permitted to assume such responsibility without any training whatever? A maternity nurse should understand something of asepsis and other safeguards for the sick. (2) "Can such a hospital be managed or controlled without a committee, seeing that the money all comes from the public?" There was no regulation against it. Perhaps under the War Charities Act public money will have to be more carefully administered. (3) "Is it a fact that the War Office pays a guinea

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