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EDITORIAL.

THE WOMAN WHO STAYED AT HOME.

Once or twice in a lifetime it may happen that we are called upon to make some momentous decision which affects not only our own lives but the lives of those around us. Such a decision has, in recent years, confronted members of the nursing profession. At the outbreak of war it was natural that trained nurses should wish to offer themselves for active service. They had knowledge, experience, skill, and they desired nothing better than to be allowed to use them in the service of the men who had given their lives to their country, when sick, maimed, and wounded they needed skilled care. Then there was the interest of the work, the desire to be "in the swim," the chance of foreign service and seeing new countries, which ordinarily is incompatible with the very modest purses of most nurses. Beyond the very laudable desire to help in a time of national emergency and distress was the glamour of novel work under novel conditions, and the heart's desire of every nurse was military service with a fixed preference for "the front" and a vista of Red Crosses in the distance.

Yet it was obvious that all nurses could not go on active service. The needs of the civilian population remained as in pre-war days, the little children, the old grannies and the chronics, were just as helpless, the dying still needed tender care as they passed down into the valley of the shadow. So, many nurses faced their problem. There was no question then of an urgent call for trained nurses. The need was for influence to procure for the trained nurse her rightful place in military hospitals when so many plums fell to those whose lack of professional knowledge was ap-

parently more than atoned for by their social influence.

So, many a nurse, with a sigh of regret, gave up her dreams of active service, extended interests, fuller life—a life full of colour under cloudless skies, in new and picturesque surroundings—and concentrated her energies on her daily work, performed under conditions more strenuous than usual, since most nursing staffs were depleted. The resolution, the devotion to duty thus exhibited, indicate the qualities which have gained for the best class of nurses, the confidence and the gratitude of all classes of the community. This devotion to duty is recognized in the report of Dr. George M. Robertson, Physician-Superintendent of the Royal Edinburgh Mental Hospital, Morningside, who comments on the severe nature of the work of the officials who have stayed at home. "There has," says Dr. Robertson, "been none of the interest and excitement and prestige which is associated with work directly connected with the army, and yet it has been as valuable and as necessary. It has, in many cases been at the sacrifice of their own feelings that they have continued at their post. It would have been easier to have gone." Many nurses will be grateful to Dr. Robertson for these appreciative words.

When the services rendered by nurses come to be considered after the War the value of the work of those who stayed at home should be estimated very highly. As the munition workers have been indispensable to the country, so the work of nurses who stayed at home, and released others for service for which they themselves were fully qualified, and desired to perform, is equally valuable and essential. They are not eligible for Red Crosses and other decorations, but we hope that some way of recognizing their invaluable services will be found.

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