

to recognise in his speech the fine national services rendered by the professional nurses to the State during the war, especially as the Imperial Nursing Services are under his own Department. This omission was the more marked in contrast with the eulogy bestowed on the amateur V.A.D. workers.

THE OFFENDING CLAUSE.

We have received several letters on the "Offending Clause" in the Agreement with the War Office, which trained nurses on the Reserve are compelled to sign before they are eligible for the £20 extra pay, and we note that one London paper has had the temerity to quote it and our remarks—that the whole pack did not at once expose its drastic and dangerous provisions, and demand its rescission, proves how deeply seated is the boycott of nursing interests, from which our profession has for years suffered in its relation to the London daily press—and what a mockery it is to speak about a free press in this country. Apparently it is free only in the pursuit of its own commercial interest.

A Matron of a military hospital writes:—"I am thankful you have published the 'Offending Clause,' in the Army Nurses' Agreement with the War Office—and hope some good may result from this publicity. I am losing several of my very best nurses, who absolutely decline to sign it, and expose themselves to the chance of professional ruin at the will and pleasure of one person's opinion. It is a monstrous demand, and I cannot blame those who refuse to sign it."

A Sister writes:—"I signed the Agreement containing the 'Offending Clause,' greatly against the grain; it is only fit for slaves—but it was a choice between signing or resigning, and I could not leave these sick and wounded men, whatever happened. It is most cruel that trained nurses should have to violate their sense of self-respect or neglect their national duty."

A Staff Nurse writes:—"I could not bring myself to subscribe to the 'Offending Clause,' but as we are so short-handed, I am still here, at the old rate of pay. Who is responsible for it? Surely not Queen Alexandra. But as she is the Head of the Imperial Military Nursing Services, she is being blamed for it. Our Matron says we are under military law, and it is very undisciplined to object to conform to it. But why should military law be unjust? I thought we were all fighting for freedom. Evidently freedom unlike charity, does not begin at home!"

A war probationer writes:—"The publication of the 'Offending Clause' caused quite a little stir in this hospital. It does not affect me, but if it did, why grumble and do nothing? Why not get at people in power and have it deleted from the Agreement—that seems the simplest way. Royalties cannot afford to be unpopular, M.P.'s love asking questions in the House, the Lords are nothing if not paternal, and Her Majesty Queen Alexandra might very well require to know from her representatives on the Nursing Board, why it

is necessary to treat her Nursing Reserve Sisters with such severity. Are their qualifications professional and personal not carefully sifted before they are appointed? Why, therefore, surmise that they are going to 'misconduct' themselves after appointment? Anyway, despotic conditions never really effect good discipline; and the 'Offending Clause' is a standing slur on the method of maintaining it in the Army Nursing Service."

We also received the following letter from an East End military hospital:—"If you had been behind the scenes here for the last few months, you would not wonder that strong measures are considered necessary at Head quarters. A few weeks ago things had come to such a pitch that the Matron-in-Chief and a very big 'brass hat' had to come down and read the Riot Act—and the half was not told to them!"

JOINT WAR COMMITTEE.

Miss Catherine Elizabeth Grice, Sister at the Queen Alexandra Hospital, Dunkirk, was on Saturday, March 17th, decorated with the Croix de Guerre by General Nollett, Commandant of the 36th Army Corps. On March 9th, Sister Grice while on duty in her ward was attacked by a patient and received serious injuries from which we are glad to say she is making excellent recovery.

As reported in the Daily Press, a fire occurred at Clevedon Red Cross Hospital, Somerset, on March 24th. The Matron in her report to Headquarters says, "Sister Gladys Westrope was on night duty, and it gives me great pleasure to inform you of the courage and coolness she displayed. Nothing could exceed the promptitude and ability she exhibited in a most difficult situation. Alone she carried a helpless patient to safety, and did everything possible to help." It is understood that the Matron, Miss Waddell, and her whole staff acted in a most exemplary and heroic manner on this occasion.

ABROAD.

The following Sisters have been deputed to duty abroad:—

Boulogne—Head Quarters.—Miss B. A. Conway (Friends' Ambulance, Dunkerque).

Miss Mabel A. Fell (Liverpool Merchants' Hospital).

Miss Amy M. Leslie.

OUR ROLL OF HONOUR.

OFFICERS CASUALTIES.

The following casualties in the Nursing Service are reported:—

MISSING, BELIEVED DROWNED.

Phillips, Staff Nurse J. J., Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve.

DIED.

Blencowe, Sister M. E., T. F. Nursing Service.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)