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EDITORIAL.

NURSES' AIDS.

"The standard of nursing for the sick and wounded should be of the highest quality that a grateful nation can provide for men who are risking their lives in the defence of the Empire." Thus the National Council of Trained Nurses affirmed by resolution at the beginning of the war, and every nurse worth her salt is in sympathy with it.

Whenever war throws a glamour over the sick and wounded, a number of persons who in time of peace have shown no disposition to care for the sick are seized with the conviction that they are heaven born nurses, and that their services are indispensable to the sick and wounded. It is true that a certain number come forward inspired by patriotic motives, willing to make themselves useful wherever they are required, and their services are utilized with advantage, and gratitude. These are not the people who clamour for place, and power, and impute unworthy motives to trained nurses, who, as members of a skilled profession, know that only by maintaining the highest standard of efficiency can the quality of nursing to which the sick and wounded are entitled, be provided.

The nursing profession in America with its usual perspicuity, and professional conscience, has defined the position of temporary war workers as that of nurses' aids. Had members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments been placed in the same position in this country at the beginning of the war there would have been no suggestion now of their promotion, without systematic training, to positions of Staff Nurse and Sister.

Yet it is seriously proposed by correspondents in the *Times*, with editorial support

from that paper, that V.A.D.s, and Special Military Probationers should be promoted to these responsible positions, and the hindrance to such promotion is ascribed to the "rigid trade-unionism of the three years' general-training nurses and matrons," an unworthy slander on a most patriotic class of women. One correspondent who is closely associated with the College of Ambulance, where short term instruction in First Aid and Nursing is, we believe, given for a consideration, states that her own Voluntary Aid Detachment is 500 strong, that a great number of the members have become excellently trained, and act as Staff Nurses, that the prospect at present of years of devotion to hospital work leads to nothing but a "blind alley" of occupation, and concludes "Surely the doctors and matrons could meet and devise a scheme whereby the experiences these women have gained may be retained and employed in the future." What type of certificated nurse would be found willing to be placed under the direction of a V.A.D. Sister? Not the nurse whose desire for the welfare of the sick and wounded is paramount. She knows that the lives of men who have fought and bled for the Empire are in the balance, and will not barter them for any consideration of personal expediency, or in the hope of any patronage to be secured through social influence. The true nurse places the welfare of the patient first, and works for it, and, if need be, fights for it uninfluenced by personal considerations.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of the war, the Army Medical Department adopted an unprofessional line of action in its relation to trained nursing by recognizing as Commandants, and placing in positions of authority in hospitals, absolutely untrained women. To attempt to estimate the evil result of this form of organization would be impossible.

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