

Therefore we say that those who, by personal service, by planning and contriving, are managing to "keep the home fires burning," so that nurses on active service, and others at home and abroad, may have a cheerful, well-kept residential club of their own to turn to, between spells of hard work, are doing real war service, all the more so, perhaps, because there is no sensation about it, but the situation demands the grit which deals cheerfully with ordinary circumstances rendered more difficult, more costly, more complicated by war conditions. All honour to them.

We are glad to be able, through the courtesy of the Editor of the *St. Helen's Reporter*, to publish a portrait of Miss Carrie Fairhurst, who—in the terrible fire which occurred recently at the Manchester Poor Law Institution, Crumpsall, resulting in the loss of fifteen lives—exhibited so much presence of mind and courage.

Nurse Fairhurst, who was on night duty in the doomed annexe, was in the bathroom at 11.25 p.m. when she noticed smoke near the door. She quickly seized a fire extinguisher and played on the place from which the smoke issued. However, there was a burst of flame, and the nurse sent to acquaint the Matron, and called on other nurses for assistance; ten of them came to her aid, and they worked heroically in the appalling catastrophe, but all speak in the highest terms of Nurse Fairhurst's work.

The heroism of one of these poor law inmates should also be recorded. While carrying her out Nurse Fairhurst was partially overcome with the smoke, and realizing the nurse's danger the woman begged her to leave her and save her own life. There is no more appalling calamity for those who have charge of sick people than a fire, and the nurses at Crumpsall are to be congratulated on their splendid courage.

We have received several letters from private nurses lately asking the reason of the slump in cases in London during the past few weeks. One asks, "Is it V.A.D.'s?" After enquiry

we find, although hundreds of private nurses are doing war work, that the public are not requiring so many nurses as formerly. The reasons are not far to seek.

1. Many well-to-do people who can afford private nurses have shut up their London houses.

2. A very large number of doctors are no longer engaged in private practice.

3. The greater cost of living, and lack of domestic service, make people hesitate to employ a nurse.

4. Patients will not come to London for operations for fear of raids.

5. Hundreds, if not thousands, of V.A.D.'s have gained a three months' experience in our general hospital training schools—and more in military hospitals during the past three years—

and when there is illness (perhaps not of the most serious nature) in a family the V.A.D. daughter's services are retained for family use. V.A.D.'s are also being employed in Nursing Homes, where trained nurses are difficult to get cheap, and where the experience will fit them to do private nursing by-and-by.

One nurse writes:—

"What do you advise? I am on a serious operation case, and the patient's daughter, who has had war nursing experience, is on night duty, on the understanding that if there is 'any difficulty' I am to be called to the patient. This by doctor's direction. The daughter is not receiving

'fees,' and the family cannot well afford two nurses, especially in these hard times. Work has been rather slack this autumn, and I cannot afford to be out, or to be disobliging to the doctor, who has been very kind to me. Also the patient is most grateful for every attention, and I rejoice to see her getting stronger all the time. Yet I do feel somehow it is not right to colleagues, as several I know are out of work, who after a long spell of military hospital work do not feel strong enough to go on with it. It is a puzzler, isn't it?" It is a puzzler. We invite the opinion of our readers in discussing it. We feel that a daughter has a right to nurse her own mother, work or no work.



MISS CARRIE FAIRHURST.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)