

## COLLEGE OF AMBULANCE.

A well-attended meeting took place March 23rd at 3 p.m., at 3, Vere Street, W., in the rooms of the College of Ambulance. Sir James Reid, in presiding, said that the purpose was to consider the future of the organization. In referring to Sir James Cantlie, he described him as an expert in the department of ambulance, having founded it 40 years ago and worked assiduously for it ever since; he had also published three text-books at the request of the Council of the British Red Cross Society, namely, 1, "First-Aid Manual," 2, "Nursing Manual," 3, "Training Manual." The speaker took occasion to congratulate Sir James Cantlie upon having received the honour of Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, which, he said, he well deserved.

In rising to speak Sir James gave a brief résumé of the history of the movement; which he started in 1878, when, at Charing Cross Hospital, he saw the need of instructing the students in first-aid to the injured in the streets. His opinion is that ambulance work, being a very important branch of medical service, should be raised to a higher and better basis. Civil ambulance work must be taught as first-aid is taught in the Army.

The work had grown so enormously since the war broke out that it had been necessary to establish a centre, which was known as the College of Ambulance. The building now occupied had been lent for a year rent free; it was now required for other purposes, and now that a move had to be made, it was believed to be an appropriate moment for considering the best means of enlarging the scheme and placing it on a permanent and national basis. A Resolution to that effect was passed, and a sum of £30,000 asked for. Sir Malcolm Morris proposed the Resolution, and Surgeon-General Evatt seconded it. No one could doubt the essential usefulness of learning efficiently how to perform first-aid to the wounded, or those taken suddenly ill; in a word, how to act in any case of emergency. The qualities of the mind which are developed and cultivated are of equal service to the patient and the student, and we should have been glad to hear the suggestion put forth that such training should form part of the curriculum of the trained nurse. It did not seem to occur to any of the speakers that this training, valuable as it is, might conceivably come into dangerous competition with that of the Graduate Nurse. There is room for a well-organized Ambulance Service for men and women—the V.A.D. is the latest development of it; its members have done good service during this war, but it must be kept quite distinct from that of trained nursing.

The arrival of League Journals is always of interest. Just recently we have received that of the City of Westminster (Hendon) Nurses' League, and of the Kingston Infirmary Nurses' League, which merit longer notice than we can devote to them in this issue.

## THE SERF CLAUSE MUST GO.

There is an old proverb that "continual dripping will wear away a stone," and this has been the policy of this Journal ever since we read the degrading Clause in their contract with the War Office, which nurses have to sign, when attached to the Reserve of Q.A.I.M.N.S. and the Territorial Force Nursing Service.

The following is the Clause to which we take the strongest exception:—

"If I, in any manner, misconduct myself or shall be (otherwise than through unavoidable illness or accident) unfit in any respect for service under this agreement, of which misconduct or unfitness you or your authorized representative shall be the sole judge, you shall be at liberty from and immediately after such misconduct or unfitness, to discharge me from further service hereunder, and thereupon all pay and allowances hereunder shall cease."

For the past year we have from time to time printed and reprinted this Clause and our objections to it. We have sent it marked to Queen Alexandra, the Head of the Imperial Military Services, the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of the War Office, the Army Council, the late Director-General of the Army Medical Department, and other persons in power.

To the members of the Nursing Boards and the Matrons-in-Chief—Miss Becher and Miss Sidney Browne—we have not appealed, as they are primarily responsible for enforcing this demoralizing policy. It was their duty to protect the members of the Military Nursing Services from injustice and they failed to do it; indeed, we were informed they approved the Clause. One fine day this Clause was enforced against one of the best and most devoted Sisters, whose work we have known intimately for twenty years. At a moment's notice, without explanation or power of appeal, this Sister was turned out of the Service; and had she not been known to us, might, after seven years' active service for the sick and wounded in South Africa, and during this war, have been professionally ruined.

The Serf Clause covered this iniquitous treatment.

As apparently it was hopeless to appeal to Lord Derby or his "authorized representative" (the Director-General), we recently laid the case before Members of Parliament, with the result that the question was to be raised in the House of Commons, immediately after the Easter recess.

Then one more opportunity of appealing to Headquarters presented itself.

The Secretary of the War Office announced to the Press on March 13th that "Nurses holding certificates for three years' training, who were desirous of being employed in military hospitals, should apply to the Matron-in-Chief."

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