

## V.A.D.'s AND THE NURSING PROFESSION.

We wrote to a few Commandants we know and invited their opinion gathered from personal experience, of whether or not V.A.D.s in their hospitals seriously contemplated being trained as professional nurses, and quote from the interesting replies of one of them. She writes:—

"There are twelve V.A.D.s here, and having heard recently from headquarters that help was forthcoming for those who intend earning a living, I put the matter of choice of future work before them. Six do not intend (nor have they any need) to enter the labour market, but the other six mean to do so. The following are their replies:—

(1) 'As I have already been nursing for three years, I do not mean to give up another three years to train as a nurse. The doctors seem quite satisfied with me here, why not outside? Then I do not intend to slave at anything as trained nurses do. I shall do private nursing from home (we know lots of doctors) and take theatre sisters' holidays or travel abroad with an invalid. I know French.'

(2) 'I do not intend to go on with nursing, too much drudgery and too little pay; we educated women must leave that sort of work to the people. I intend to train for a Welfare Supervisor; six months' training and the prospect of earning £400 sounds sensible.' [Does it?—Ed.]

(3) 'It is ridiculous to imagine after all our training during the war any woman is going to do general servants' work in a hospital for any length of time demanded. We V.A.D.s have seen the type of women the system produces; splendid, of course, but with no more moral courage than a mouse. I hope to become a medical woman, and as my people cannot possibly find the cash for my medical education, I shall willingly avail myself of the Scholarship Scheme which offers to pay for it.'

(4) 'Yes, I shall train as a nurse for Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service! as the War Office has ear-marked future vacancies for V.A.D.s we may as well avail ourselves of the privilege. No doubt, the Service will be better paid in the future.'

(5) 'I am going to be a woman doctor, a nurse is neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring, at everybody's call. The Royal Army Medical Service will be open to women by the time I am through.'

(6) 'I am going to be a social reformer, and if I starve I am going to pay my own way. I have seen so much of which I indignantly disapprove during the war I want to help to put things straight for the workers. Can you recommend me a school of Political Economics? I have read all the works by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb. The Red Cross is essentially snobbish: society patronage, government by right of birth or

money. These people mean well but their ignorance enrages me.'

"The one really dear girl," writes the Commandant; "untiring and unselfish; 'Tommy's Darling' the men called her, with the making of an ideal nurse in her, is going to be married, alas!"

Why "alas"? After all, wifehood and motherhood is the ideal life for the very best women, and needed for the future generations of our people, if they are to be well bred.

What strikes us in these opinions is the poor estimation in which so many V.A.D.'s hold nursing. This is the result, no doubt, of the depreciation of its status under lay Joint War Committee management and the *personnel* selected by them to represent our professional ideals. All might have been so different under the inspiration of a real leader. Imagine if we had had an Isla Stewart, or an Isabel Robb, or an Adelaide Nutting at the War Office or at 83, Pall Mall! Nursing would not then have been trampled in the gutter and splashed on to the hoardings as the most pauperised and negligible of women's work in the War. It will take us years to regain the prestige of our profession, built up by the self-sacrifice and devotion to duty of so many great women, and with which, for the past four years, Society has been playing battledore and shuttlecock.

## CARE OF THE WOUNDED.

The Queen, through the Hon. Lady Lawley, Hon. Secretary of the Queen Mary Needlework Guild, has informed local organisations that as with the cessation of hostilities the main purpose of the Guild will have disappeared, Her Majesty has decided, with the exception of the orthopaedic branches, to close the Guild on January 31.

After stating that the Queen proposed to devote the substantial balance at her command to a special scheme, associated with the name of the Guild, for disabled sailors and soldiers, Lady Lawley goes on to say:—"Her Majesty is very loth to say good-bye to those who have been connected with her in that work for four years, and hopes that many of them may still like to work with her in this scheme, or by enrolling themselves as members of her permanent London Needlework Guild, if they are not already members of their own guilds."

We commend to those who administer other funds for the sick and wounded the example of Her Majesty in devoting the balance to schemes for the disabled.

The good work done by Mrs. Alfred Paine, Hon. Secretary, Treasurer and Superintendent, and the Bedford Centre of the St. John Ambulance Association, 48, Harper Street, Bedford, in supplying soft slippers and flannel boots for the wounded, has gone on without intermission since the work-

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