

familiar. But the activities of the Fund surely ought not to stop short at the collection and distribution of this great sum of money. The voluntary system depends not only upon the sympathy but also upon the knowledge of the public; and there is an immense opportunity of educating the public in the work and methods of hospitals. We can see how in a smaller sphere such as Leicester or Newcastle an able committee can arouse local interest and local patriotism until their hospitals rest securely upon knowledge and affection. No single hospital can do the same thing in London, the area is too vast, the Press too general in its character.

But a great central organisation with a well-equipped publicity department could achieve similar results; not necessarily begging, not pleading the cause of any one hospital, but explaining the way in which our system works, its advantages, its difficulties.

If we believe that the Committee of the Fund are convinced that the voluntary system is good and worth maintaining, it is surely well that our reasons for this faith should be known. No one can fail to be struck by the frequency of the pessimistic assumption that the voluntary system is doomed; yet how can we expect to have generous support and eager service from those who believe that they are working for a lost cause? Our cause is not doomed, it is stronger than ever; the Fund itself has two million invested reasons for thinking so—but the public does not know it.

The war has made it clear how few people really understood the work of a nurse, the skill and training it involves, or the methods by which hundreds of women are sent out every year from London hospitals, adequately equipped for the care of every kind of illness or accident.

Surely it is time, too, that certain perennial fictions were finally disposed of, and the staffing of London hospitals explained. I still meet with people who believe that patients in our wards are experimented upon by unqualified students, while the position of house-surgeon is frequently regarded as the highest achievement of a surgeon's ambition. Not one person in a thousand understands the arrangement of the medical and surgical staff or the relation of medical schools to hospitals; and

I am speaking of ordinary well-informed people, who might be supposed to have opportunities of knowing, and who are frequently generous subscribers.

Lastly, since we are asking for help from the Committee of the Fund, may we not look to them for more light and guidance in times of crisis and difficulty? The Insurance Act produced, I think, several elaborate forms, but not much guidance, in a new and complicated situation. The war has produced an inquiry form, but we have had so far little attempt to co-ordinate the hospitals and to place the accommodation available at the service of the nation with the least interference with the civil population.

To sum up, then, this attempt at a critical view of an admirable organisation, we need less control in matters of detail, more guidance in matters of principle, less statistical inquiry, more practical inspection—above all things, not less financial help, but more influential assistance in putting the methods and the value of the voluntary system before the public.—I am, etc.,

ASSISTANT HOSPITAL SECRETARY.

October 13, 1914.

### The Recreations of Convalescing Soldiers.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

STR,—May I, through the columns of your valuable Journal, offer my sincere thanks to the large number of donors to "The *Tatler* Games Bureau," and make a further appeal for games? So far I have received over 9,900 games, of which number 5,020 were draughts, dominoes, chess, and playing cards.

These I have distributed among seventy-one hospitals and homes where our gallant men are being cared for, but I am still receiving numerous applications, and I am desirous of supplying the camps in Great Britain with games for the winter evenings. I shall be most grateful for any games, cards, dominoes, draughts, or chess sets that your readers care to send to me at "The *Tatler* Games Bureau," Great New Street, London, E.C. The donor's name and address should be written on the outside of each parcel, and acknowledgment will be made in the *Tatler*.—Yours truly,

SYLVIA SPOTTISWOODE,

Hon. Superintendent.

## Motor-Cars as Ambulance Wagons.

### THE ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB SPECIFICATIONS.

THERE has been such an insistent call during the past weeks for additional motor ambulances for the Front that it is opportune to note the requirements adopted by the Royal Automobile Club for the conversion of the private motor-car for ambulance work.

These requirements were recently published in *Cooper's Vehicle Journal*—a trade journal—by whose kind permission we are able to quote some extracts:

"At the beginning of the war the idea was that each vehicle should be arranged to carry as many wounded as possible, but since then, in passing ambulances for service, the R.A.C. have strongly set their faces against the considerable rear overhang which was inevitable in some cases so long as bodies were applied indiscriminately to chassis. The body recommended is of the well pattern, and, with the floor-boards lifting up, is convertible into an extemporised waggonette—a feature of real importance, for it is found that the vast majority of wounded can be carried in this way. In the design the R.A.C. engineers have favoured a hoop-stick form of construc-

tion, which should be amply strong in view of the fact that the weight of the upper stretcher is partly taken by the centre pillars, and that the part of the load carried by the hoop-sticks only falls at a point not more than 2 ft. above the floor. As far as the stretcher accommodation is concerned . . . the possibilities of carrying not only the British Army pattern of stretcher, but those in use by other nationalities, have had to be considered.

"All methods of spring support or suspension have been discarded, consequently the lower stretchers rest on the floor, the upper on shelves or ledges."

The above extracts refer to a four-stretcher ambulance, but the R.A.C. have also prepared requirements for a two-stretcher body when the size of chassis will not permit of the larger ambulance being fitted. The "well" form of construction is employed in this also, although the "waggonette" form of accommodation is not provided. The space that naturally arises in the well on the stretcher side is utilised for locker accom-