

"The Erskines Are Ready"

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Since the day when Japan entered the war, India has been feeling the approach of the struggle to its doors. Modern India exists in the midst of the discordant symphonies caused by the great war and civil disobediences. But amidst all this encircling gloom and murky air of cloud and smoke, the people are organising various activities to strengthen and defend India. In all warring countries, except India, so far thank God, loss of human life from this destructive form of warfare has been great. Intense A.R.P. activity has been a natural consequence in India, particularly in towns and cities.

Every one knows what happens after a big raid in a country district. Unless the doctor is at hand with full equipment, the victim has to be rushed to the nearest hospital, which may be 50 or 60 miles away. Before he receives treatment, his condition is often made far worse. Fractured ribs have pierced lungs and ended lives during these long, hurried trips in the back seats of automobiles; broken bones jab through tender flesh and simple breaks become compound. The ghastly toll exacted during the air raids in Burma was due in part to the lack of courage and efficient care immediately after the raid. We have heard that many nurses and doctors fled to save their own lives. Is not that selfish? Do you call this human? No! Anyway that incident has given us in India a good lesson. I am sure we are now so careful and vigilant, that no such thing will be repeated here.

The object of air attack is to dislocate the war effort and disturb the morale of the civil population. The primary responsibility for active defence to resist the enemy lies with defence services. Efficient organisation is vital and the control centre in A. R. P. must be so organized, that all necessary action can be taken rapidly and efficiently. We have got hundreds of volunteers recruited from this district, both men and women. They are given training in first-aid and A. R. P. There are some trained nurses, both men and women, recruited for A. R. P. alone.

Our city, just like other cities in India, has got A. R. P. controllers, paid and honorary wardens, first aiders, fire fighters, messengers etc. It is a marvellous thing to see how the whole city responds to the A. R. P. practices, which are being held once a month. I am very confident that even if the enemy tries to dislocate our activities, he will surely fail.

Now I am going to tell you how we, the ERSKINES, are so well practised in A. R. P. The plan of our work carried out in our hospital, if I am not wrong, is more or less on the same lines as in the other hospitals. All the members of the hospital staff (both nurses and orderlies) have passed the first aid test and are holders of the St. John Ambulance certificate. In addition the matron of our hospital gave a series of lectures in A. R. P. to the nurses, and the superintendent to the rest of the staff.

After the Air Raid Siren.—For emergency we have got many appropriate shelters in different places of the hospital. As soon as the fluctuating or warbling signal of varying pitch is heard—(A. R. P. siren), the observer corps will run up to the terrace to watch the raiders and inform the authorities concerned. Drastic lighting restrictions are taken if it is night, and all the doors and windows are closed at once. The fire fighters take their stirrup pumps and buckets and run up to their posts. The student nurses carry the bed-ridden patients and shelter them in safe places away from openings. The staff nurses take all the other cases and fix them in their allotted shelters and stay back in their respective wards. The chief warden and the other wardens will make quick rounds, instructing and advising wherever they find any fault. Every one is so alert and quick, that not a single second will be wasted and all the above precautions will be perfect within one to two minutes.

During the Siren.—The nurses must set an example of coolness and prevent panic, and it is the duty of every nurse to reassure the patients.