

It follows, therefore, that those who control this fight and those who will re-inforce the army must be among the most important people in the world. Certainly the world will treat them on that basis.

It long ago decided that you have no working hours that anybody is bound to respect and that nothing except extreme bodily illness will excuse you for refusing to help the man who thinks he will need your help at any hour of the day or night. Nobody will care whether you are in your beds or your baths, or on a holiday, or at church, or in a theatre. The little vitality you have accumulated in your leisure will be dragged out of you again. In all times of flood, fire, famine, plague, pestilence, battle, murder and sudden death it will be required of you that you report for duty at once and that you stay on duty until your strength—or your conscience relieves you—whichever may be the longer period. These are some of your obligations and I do not think they will grow any lighter.

Have you heard of any recent legislation to limit your output, any bill for an eight-hours' day for doctors? Do you know of any change in public opinion that will allow you not to attend a patient when you know that the man never means to pay? Have you heard of any outcry against the people who could perfectly well afford to pay you but who prefer to cadge around the hospitals and get advice and glass eyes and cork legs for nothing? I have not. It is required of you at all moments to save others. It is nowhere laid down that you must save yourselves.

That is to say, you belong to the privileged class. You and kings are about the only people whose explanation policemen will accept if you exceed the speed limit with your motor cars. On presentation of your visiting card you can pass through the most turbulent crowd unmolested and even with applause. If you wave a yellow flag over a centre of population you can turn it into a desert. If you choose to fly a red cross flag over a desert you can turn it into a centre of population towards which, as I have seen, men will crawl on their hands and knees. You can forbid a ship to enter a port. If you think it necessary to the success of an operation you can stop a 20,000 ton liner with her mails in mid-ocean till the operation is concluded. You can tie up the traffic of a port without notice. You can order whole quarters of a city to be pulled down or burned, and you can count on armed co-operation to see that your prescriptions are efficiently carried out.

We poor patients do not often dispute your orders unless we are frightened by the long continuance of an epidemic. In that case, if we are uncivilized, we say that you have poisoned the drinking water for your own purposes, and we throw stones at you. If we are civilized we do something else, but civilized people can throw stones, too.