



### Our Foreign Letter.

#### AN ENGLISH NURSE IN NEW YORK.

I HAVE not much to tell concerning Nursing news in New York, having been more than four months absent in Europe. But, just before I left America, towards the end of May, after a very hard winter for Nurses in general, as "times were bad" here as elsewhere, the Home Bureau Nurses' Club at 104, West 41st Street, held a "package sale," with the purpose of putting our mutual benefit fund on a safe basis, for, owing to these same "bad times" very few members of our club felt themselves in a position to incur any expense, that did not seem absolutely necessary. The greater number of the members of our club, although unable to join the fund at the time, worked well and enthusiastically, and our package sale, owing also to the kindness of our respective friends in buying freely, was a much greater success than we had anticipated, and we felt that our nucleus at the bank, although not mighty in its dimensions, was formed, and we were in a position to invest, and also to give help to our benefit fund members during the ensuing summer should that necessity arise. Fortunately only one of our small number needed pecuniary help during an illness of five or six weeks, and now we are waiting to hold a meeting next month (November), to arrange matters—to plan the work that each one of our mutual benefit fund members ought to do to help on the work, and also to consult together as to whether we are to keep the fund entirely for the benefit of our club members, the numbers of whom are gradually, although slowly increasing, or to allow outside Nurses to derive benefit from this sick fund. Should this latter arrangement be decided upon, the fund and our club would then be entirely separate affairs.

We Nurses consider that there is very little Nursing to be done in New York between the months of June and October, for during those months the wealthier classes leave the city for either Europe or their country or seaside places, and the doctors take their vacation also, so, as we ourselves are liable to scatter between May and November, no meetings have been held in 41st Street since our package sale.

Some of the "times" prophets say, the coming winter is to be as bad for Nurses, as was the last; however we can in the meantime console ourselves with the knowledge that "times," like the weather prophets are not always omniscient.

In default of New York news, some of your readers may be interested, in having a slight sketch of my experiences abroad this summer. While Nursing in New York last spring (for I, unlike the majority, did not suffer from slackness of work. I have been called by one who ought to know "one of Mephistopheles'

own," so lucky have I always been in my Nursing life.) I was asked if I would accompany an old New York patient of mine and her family to Europe, she being very much of an invalid, and her family anxious for me to take the responsibility of her charge. This expedition was to be undertaken with the faint hope of the voyage and change of scene and thought doing her good. There was no hesitation in my acceptance of this proposal, both because I liked the family with whom I had kept up friendly relations ever since I had nursed the patient, three years before, and, because I delight in travelling through this fair world of ours.

We, a party of six, left New York at the end of May, and took the pleasant sea voyage to Genoa, passing close to the Azores, and calling at that imposing grand old rock, Gibraltar. On reaching Florence in due time, my patient called in an American doctor, resident there, who, on examining her, strongly urged her to give up her original idea, as suggested by her New York physician, of spending a month at Bürzenstock, in Switzerland, and to go instead to Munich to consult Professor Oertel, whom he considered one of the greatest European authorities on the heart. My patient had for some years past almost entirely given up solid food—having a very great distaste for meat of any kind—and was living on milk, broths, etc., and farinaceous food. Her abdomen was abnormally large, her pulse a rapid and uncertain one—and he said we must at once reduce the liquid diet and insist on meat being taken, and all this in preparation for the treatment that Professor Oertel would prescribe.

In course of time we worked our way to Munich, and, after some few inquiries, found Dr. Oertel's office, and my patient, who had also almost entirely given up walking, toiled up two flights of stairs before we were admitted. We had had no particulars given us by the Florence doctor, so were considerably surprised, after spending a few minutes in the waiting room, to see, appearing at an inner door, a very little man, clad in a dressing gown, and smiling and bowing us a welcome in the most genial fashion. His face is remarkable for its expression of kindly feeling.

Since our introduction to Professor Oertel, we have been given a slight sketch of his history, which is as follows:—When he reached the age of twenty or twenty-one, he was very stout, and was given up as a hopeless case of fatty degeneration of the heart, by doctors.

He determined to try to save his life, and at once proceeded to Switzerland to walk and diet himself. He is now a man of apparently more than fifty years of age, and, in consequence of his discoveries with regard to his own condition, does an immense amount of good to the majority of his patients, who come to him from all parts of the world. Mark Twain's wife derived so much benefit from the treatment, that he—Mark Twain—told the doctor in Florence, who sent them to Professor Oertel, that he can never sufficiently grateful to him.

After being escorted into the office by Dr. Oe..., our spirits fell to zero when we discovered that the little doctor could speak neither English nor French. We, alas! could not speak more than a few words of German, only enough for every day wants in connection with waiters, chamber-maids, and railway officials. By dint of our limited knowledge of the language, we arranged that the Professor should come to our hotel

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