

M. Mesureur then rose, and, in a few graceful words, said he could not sufficiently express his pleasure at the *entente cordiale* existing between the nurses of England and France. He asked Miss Stewart's acceptance of the beautiful medal.

On the front of this medal is a group of a woman with a baby at her breast, sitting on the steps of a doorway, and turning for help, and placing her hand in that of a graceful woman who is bending over her, consoling and succouring her. Round the reverse side of the medal run the words "Administration Générale de l'Assistance Publique," and in the centre is inscribed "Hommage à Miss Isla Stewart, 27 Juin, 1908." The medal is enclosed in a morocco case lined with blue velvet, which is an admirable background to the dull silver of which it is composed. The *Assistance Publique* has the entire control of all the Paris Hospitals, which contain nearly 16,000 beds.

Miss Stewart's delight at this kind recognition of her work was charmingly expressed, and she desired that her thanks should be conveyed to the eminent Government Department, which had conferred upon her so much honour.

A scene of great enthusiasm followed the presentation of the medal, the whole company rising, and accompanied by the band, singing "La Marseillaise."

THE REPLY.

Miss Stewart received a great ovation when she rose to express her thanks. She said:

Madam Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I must thank you all for the honour you have done me to-night, and the very gracious proof you have given me of your appreciation.

These lovely bouquets, this charming illuminated address, your presence here this evening, and the way in which you have received the toast of my health, have gone straight to my heart. I have some difficulty in expressing what I feel, as you may well believe! I have listened to all your Chairman has said of me with feelings of the deepest humility, indeed, indeed, I don't deserve the half of what she has said; but nevertheless it is a great pleasure to me to hear such unmeasured praise from a woman I esteem so highly as I do Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, for however mistaken she may be in the estimate of my work, and my character, I know she believes what she says, or she would not have said it!

We are all inclined to be too sparing of our praise, our neighbours' faults are more interesting than our neighbours' virtues. Therefore to me this is a very special evening, nay! I may say it is *the* evening of my life, for I

stand in a position very few women stand in, and I look round on this great room full of friends who are over-estimating my virtues! What care I if to-morrow some of you remember my faults and failings! To-night is mine, the memory of which will be with me always and which no one can take from me!

This evening I look back on nearly 29 years of work and life in hospitals. It was on the 29th September, 1879, that I arrived, a poor, shivering probationer at St. Thomas's Hospital! I should like to tell you something of the conditions which prevailed in those days. You must remember that St. Thomas's Hospital was almost the only Training School for Nurses in those days. St. Bartholomew's Hospital had only begun to take the first step on the road of progress, and those fine Nursing Homes which are found in connection with so many hospitals were still in the future. The Nightingale probationers lived under the rule of two very stern women, the Home Sister and the Matron. Of the Home Sister I need say nothing, she was narrow-minded and hard, but the Matron cannot be so lightly passed over. Mrs. Wardroper had a personality which struck terror into our hearts! She was a clever shrewd woman who realised the need of a hard rule for pioneers. She had a very firm belief in the wickedness which lies at the heart of all probationers and in their phenomenal aptitude for getting into mischief when not actively restrained! I remember one nurse who had committed the most heinous offence; she had spoken to one of the Junior Staff outside the hospital! She was ordered to appear before Mrs. Wardroper at 11 o'clock the next morning, but rather than face the dread ordeal she escaped through the window during the night! Although Mrs. Wardroper was a hard woman, she was in many ways a just woman, and had she been a little less hard she might almost have been a great woman.

To whose imagination we owed our diet I cannot say, but we gave Home Sister the credit for it. We had cold roast mutton for breakfast at 6.30 a.m. six mornings a week, and cold boiled salt pork on Sundays.

My only remembrance of dinners is a procession of legs of mutton! but our supper consisted mainly of porridge made of very coarse oatmeal and eaten with black treacle. One little incident I recall with some amusement; we had lectures on chemistry, and a dear old gentleman wasted many hours teaching us chemical cooking, which is as far removed as is possible from practical cooking. He said that sugar should not be cooked, and from that day all our

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