

nurses in the ward, but if there were I did not recognise them as such, and probably mistook them for patients who were allowed to be up. Presently a man came in carrying a mattress which he deposited on the next bed to that of the dreadful looking old woman, and my heart sank as I realised that I was to be her neighbour. The return of the Matron caused me to brace myself up for the ordeal of going to bed in public, but perhaps my youth, coupled with my extreme misery, softened her heart, for laying her hand kindly on my shoulder she said, "I do not think this is the place for you, my child; would you like to go to the children's ward instead?" Needless to say, I assented gladly, and she led the way upstairs to a large bright room more like a ward than any I had seen previously. I cannot recall how many beds there were in it, but I was pleased to see that they were all empty except two, which were occupied by two children asleep. It was with great thankfulness that I laid my aching head and feverish limbs on the little bed allotted to me, and the fact that no one washed me, nor did my hair, nor took my temperature and pulse, did not worry me in the least. I only wanted to be let alone, and I was.

On Sunday, the ward was quite empty; the two children I had seen the previous night were not ill, but merely the offspring of married nurses. At 11 o'clock a woman brought me the usual basin of "bouillon," with great blobs of grease floating on it, and, remarking that the room was too hot to stop in, turned and fled, and from that time till the evening no one came near me. I could not stop in bed, it seemed on fire, so I walked restlessly up and down the room trying to find coolness in the bareness of the boards, and the hard wooden chairs. The heat of the day culminated in a terrific thunderstorm, and between the claps the sound of Sankey and Moody's hymns sung in French rose upon the breathless air and turned my thoughts to England, home, and comfort.

Just as it was growing dark the Matron and a kind nurse appeared and put me tenderly to bed again with no reproaches for my rash conduct; they even took my temperature and pulse, and as a final attention pressed another basin of "bouillon" upon me. That night the nurses came to bed more quietly; one of them even came and spoke to me, so I guessed that at last they considered me really ill, though I had not been officially declared so by the doctor.

Monday was a great day. The doctor came; he could not speak a word of English; his manners were rough, and he was certainly no gentleman, as he did not think it necessary to remove his hat, even in the presence of the Matron. I do not remember ever seeing him without his hat, except when he came to wish me "bon voyage" after receiving an unexpected fee. However, the result of his first visit was eminently satisfactory, as I was removed to a little white-washed room on the lower floor, close to the women's ward, for which I was to pay the sum of four francs a day. I had my own especial nurse to wait upon me, a big, fat, jolly-

looking woman, the mother of a boy of twelve, who occasionally brought me my food. The first thing she did was to take my temperature and put a huge blister on my right side, which was kept on till about eight o'clock at night; its removal was accomplished with the assistance of a slatternly looking woman, who held a flickering candle, and said she wanted to hear me scream. I disappointed her expectations, but nearly gave her the pleasure of seeing me faint instead.

I now became overwhelmed with kindness and attention from all within the hospital; the Matron made quite a fuss with me, and the nurses would constantly come and sit on my bed and talk to me. I might receive visitors on any day at any hour, and even the visitors of the other patients were brought to the door to catch a glimpse of "la petite Anglaise," the show patient. My nurse was a kind-hearted woman, but scarcely a restful one. She burst in and out of my room like a whirlwind, and always sat on my bed with a bounce, while she discoursed cheerfully and loudly upon her profession, to which she referred as a "sale métier!"

As long as people were kind to me, I was fairly contented with my surroundings, but I did not get well; the doctor said I was "chronique." The only drawbacks to my recovery were the absence of nursing and nourishing food. Every day for nearly a fortnight my diet was the same—a basin of camomile tea at 7 a.m., "bouillon" at 11 a.m., and again at 5 p.m., and that was all, except for a glass of iced "tisane" to take in the night. A small hand-basin was placed by my side in the morning, and I made my own toilet as best I could. I was never washed all over, nor beyond the blister did I receive any treatment or alleviation for the pain in my side, which, by the end of a fortnight, extended from my waist to my neck. The nights were the worst part of all; the shutters of my window were tightly fastened, and I was shut up in the inky blackness and heat to pass the long weary hours in restlessly tossing to and fro and longing for day.

As I did not get better, they talked of putting another blister on my side. I mentioned this fact in my pencilled note home, and received by return a telegram to say that my mother was coming to fetch me home. She came and was received with the greatest kindness by all, and was allowed to stay in the hospital so that she might be near me. I was fed upon chicken, Brand's essence, and other nourishing dainties, and in a few days I found myself *en route* for England.

I was quite sorry to leave the little Hospice Protestant in spite of my hardships; they gave me a very kind send-off, and expressed a hope that I would come and see them again one day. The Matron explained to me by way of apology that she did not at first think I was really ill.

Fortunately, though I returned home to face the rigours of an English winter with one lung described by my doctor as a useless sodden mass, I made a complete recovery, and hope one day to return to Bordeaux to visit the Hospice Protestant under its new and improved conditions.

E. U.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)