

half an hour before we could see the Prefet. We had made the acquaintance of a charming youth who was a 'sauftteur'—corresponding, I think, to our St. John's Ambulance men at home, whose duty it was to conduct the wounded civil population to the hospital. He told us that they had an excellently organised service, and whenever a bomb hit anyone, the police sent up, and the 'sauftteurs' went at once and carried in the wounded. I asked if we could see the hospital, to which he replied that he would ask permission to take us there himself, which he did. We asked for the Directrice, and found to my great interest that she had been trained at the London Hospital. She showed us all over the beautiful old building, which has been fearfully damaged by fire—a nurse was badly injured, a maid killed, also many patients. The nurses' quarters have been utterly destroyed, and they are now camping anywhere! Formerly they had 700 beds, now they have only about 200 patients, about half of whom are in wards that have been extemporised in the cellars. The coal cellar, an enormous place, has had a stove put in and here were a double row of beds, mostly of chronic cases, now come to hospital to die. The matron told us that the war is killing the old people very quickly.

"There are, of course, no windows; only the wide door at the top of the cellar stairs to give light and air. There are also a women's ward and a maternity ward in the cellar, and terribly hot and stuffy they were; no daylight at all, and practically no ventilation; no light anywhere, except oil lamps. The other wards were on the ground floor, and were beautifully airy by reason partly of the fact that most of the windows were broken. The Matron told us that she had had them repaired and the place tidied up ten times, and she was now tired of trying to keep it whole.

"Most of the surgical cases were those who had been hurt by the bombs. We saw one man brought in yesterday whose leg was smashed to bits; he looked very ill and not likely to recover.

"Everything is splendidly organized, and all have their orders to go directly down into the cellars when bombardment begins. The Matron told us she never went into the cellars. She sleeps all night, and never wakes for anything. In the morning her nurses tell her how many bombs have fallen, &c.!

"The Germans were in R— for ten days, and they had 70 wounded German officers. They objected to going to bed at eight, and one night were making a row and frightening the nurses. So she went to them and said that in that hospital there were neither Germans nor officers, only sick folk, and that if they could not obey their nurses like other sick people, they would go—the hospital had no room for them—and she thought they ought to be ashamed to behave like that. The officers saluted, said: 'Sister, we are sorry, we are going to bed,' and they went to bed like lambs! She had no more trouble with them, she said.

"She also told us they had only two or three

cases of typhoid—of which there was hardly any in R—. Their sanitary arrangements are excellent.

"Then we went back, after seeing all she could show us, to the Hotel de Ville, where we interviewed the Maire and the Sous-Prefet. The Maire particularly seemed interested in all we had to say, and said that he would certainly write to the Prefecture at Châlons, should we need help in getting sick people out of the city. For the moment they had accommodation for them. Unfortunately they could not give us the address of the woman who had asked to be brought away, and whose letter we afterwards found had not come through the Sous-Prefet, so we went straight on to Chamery to fetch Mme. Ledoux. It is her first baby, poor little woman; her husband was "gravement blessé" four months ago, and since then she has had no news at all. He was a compositor at R— before the war, and during our long motor ride back she gave me such a charming picture of their life there. She had a terrible time during the bombardment, and spent the nights in the cellars for six weeks. She spoke of the Germans having been in R—, but said they were "très gentils," and that one she met had been so sad, and had wept over having to fight and leave his wife and children. She showed him the picture of her husband, and he wished her good fortune and his safe return. She said that many of her friends had found the same. Her courage is splendid. She said: 'If he never comes back to me, I must bring up my child and work for him—one must have courage these days—one has moments, but it is no good to weep, it only brings weakness.' She was cleanly lodged in Chamery but could not be cared for there. Her mother-in-law, also a refugee there with her, spoke most gratefully of having a place to send her daughter to and said: 'I confide her to your care.' I think it is very touching the way these people trust us. There were we—arrived in the dusk, absolutely unexpected as to time, of a foreign country, and yet this young mother to be, rose up, laid down her sewing, put on her hat and cloak, and came away with us absolutely alone into the dark.

"It is now midnight, and as we have to rise early I must stop, but I could write you stories of these people by the hour.

"We are thankful to hear Miss Butler, Miss Pattison and Mrs. Sherlicker are soon coming—we shall need all the help we can get, I think.

"We want clothing for our children as well as the babies and their mothers—and will friends in England remember that French mothers are apt to be very large—they would smile if they could see us trying to make some of the garments fit.

"If I can be spared for an hour or two I hope to see something of the interesting developments of the work at Fère Champenoise. We have patients to fetch from that direction I think, and we take it in turns to do this work in our off-duty times. My "day off" at R— was the first time I had been away from the hospital for some time, except just to get our permits.

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