

## FRENCH FLAG NURSING CORPS.

Miss Grace Ellison, the *Directrice-Générale* of the French Flag Nursing Corps in France, has submitted a Report to the Committee in London for publication in the press, from which we have pleasure to present the following information.

### OFFICIAL REPORT.

At the end of three months' work I am able to testify to the enormous progress that the nurses have made in France. They themselves do not notice it, but I who have just returned from a complete tour of the hospitals am more than gratified with the gigantic strides they have made. Everywhere where the nurses started work they had the same difficulties to contend with: (1) No one had the least idea what a British, trained nurse was; (2) although a special typed definition of what a nurse was was submitted to each doctor, and I took the trouble to explain the social position of a nurse and her diploma, the doctors have had to test the nurses for themselves.

From the 3rd region this week twelve nurses have been selected to go to the front. When I arrived in Evreux I was greeted by the doctor with "I hope you have not come to take away *les nurses*," and Dr. Leo is using all the influence he can to keep his nurses with him till he goes to the front, and then he will take them with him.

At Lisieux the *Médecin Chef*, in spite of the ministerial order to send a nurse to Dunkirk, kept her back, and sent another to Paris to see if I could not see the Minister to give him permission to keep her, and in a letter to me he said, "Why have I been privileged to know what it means to have English nurses, and then as soon as my Hospital is in working order for them to be taken away again?"

A correspondent recently wondered if it was right to let these nurses come to France? I say most decidedly Yes, when I see the dirt and disorganisation and suffering they go to, and afterwards notice the whole changed moral atmosphere of the patients, and their gratitude; they simply adore the "Sisters." The Sisters are receiving letters of thanks not only from the patients but from the whole family of the soldiers.

I frequently tell the nurses it requires only an ordinary nurse to step into a well organised hospital, but an extraordinary nurse to work here. Everything the nurses do is noticed. Their own clean appearance, &c. Their work most certainly means the uplifting of the whole nursing profession in France. Quite half the soldiers are gentlemen, and having once been taken care of by the nurses they will have nothing else, and this war over they will demand that the conditions as they were at the beginning of the war shall not occur again. The doctors, too, have seen the nurses work. Dr. Maure, who is working at Talence, will now have only nurses in the theatre, and "a ministerial order has been

issued that only trained nurses are to work at the new contagious hospital shortly to be opened by the Government at Rouen." The Prefect of Evreux writes: "Everywhere I hear the praises of the English nurses."

The Report ends: "I have noticed in all the hospitals where our British nurses are working the enormous difference in the appearance of the place, the cleanliness of the patients, their well-made beds, and the comfortable manner they were lying in bed. The floors are clean, and the patients and infirmières have been induced not to spit on the floor, which they did when the nurses first came. The patients themselves look forward to being washed each day, and to having their bedsores and backs attended to and their nails cut. The nurses generally complain of having too little work. Sixty dressings a day was not one day's work, one told me. It seems to me to have instituted important reforms such as these are, and to have made so many poor souls happy and comfortable, even if their lives have not been spared is something of which to be immensely proud. The hospitals are primitive, but we in England do not seem to realise what it means to have a whole nation under arms, a nation so unprepared for war as was France. Her peace estimate for her hospitals was about 1,000. That she has now 4,800 hospitals proves how splendidly the much criticised French Service de Santé has been doing its work."

The Committee naturally received this Report with very sincere pleasure, and we beg as a member of it to offer our warm felicitations to Miss Grace Ellison, our representative in France, and to every member of the French Flag Nursing Corps, they are keeping another flag we all love flying, whilst they are serving with so much devotion the sick and wounded of our Allies.

The work of Miss Conway Gordon and her unit has been greatly appreciated in France; and, as we reported a month ago, they were selected for work in the War Zone. They are now busy in the beautiful Prieuré de Binson. She has with her Miss Richards and two Queen's Nurses—Miss Macaulay and Miss Willetts. The general opinion expressed of Queen's Nurses is, that they are admirably adapted for work under the French Flag where making the best of things is so necessary.

A few weeks ago Sister Mitchell and four of her unit vanished into the War Zone, and we are pleased to hear good news of them. She writes, "We have now got near enough to the Front not to be allowed to put our address, being about eight miles from the firing line. Two of the Sisters are in a hospital in the town, where they have a very comfortable room in the hospital with an infirmière told off to look after them. The cooking is done by the nuns. In addition to the nuns and the infirmières there are two Red Cross ladies, and all of them are kindness itself to the Sisters. The remaining three of us are in a country house about two kilometres from the village; it is not very large but the grounds round it are beautiful, and at present gay with

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)