

Our Foreign Letter.

NURSING IN NEW ORLEANS.

AS "Foreign Letters" are now quite a feature of the NURSING RECORD, I feel sure it will interest your readers to learn how nursing matters are progressing in the South, especially as it appears to me that the constitution of the Training School in connection with the Charity Hospital in New Orleans overcomes a difficulty which appears to exist in Europe in connection with the training of religious Sisters.

The Nursing Department of this splendid Institution is presided over by a Sister Superioress, Sister Agnes, Miss Agnes O'Donnell acting as Superintendent of Nursing, and in this School, Sisters of Charity and lay nurses are educated together, on modern and scientific lines, receive the same certificate and medal at the graduating exercises, the lay nurses leaving the Hospital at the end of their term of training, the Sisters of Charity remaining in the service of the hospital and helping to train the new class of Probationers. Thus the noble work goes on with infinite patience, infinite love, and infinite devotion to the cause of suffering humanity. Why should not the system be adopted in all countries where the Catholic faith prevails?

THE CHARITY HOSPITAL.

A diploma from the Charity Hospital Training School means more than the simple parchment attesting the qualifications of the winner. The Charity Hospital of New Orleans is one of the grandest charitable Institutions in the world; but it is more than this—it is the centre of higher medical training in the South, the Mecca whither students and physicians from all sections of the South, of Mexico and the South American continents, come to perfect themselves in the high calling which they have entered upon. The hundreds of cases that are daily treated within its walls, the superior advantages that are offered for the study, clinically, of every character of disease, the splendid apparatus, superior supply of instruments, and, above all, the high standing, not only in the United States, but in Europe, of its distinguished faculty and expert corps of nurses, all these combine to give a superior character to the diploma awarded to the graduates of a Training School for Nurses conducted under such auspices and affording such advantages to students.

"A HALCYON DAY."

Perhaps the words "Graduating Exercises" do not convey to English readers their true meaning. Here with us the function of presenting the certificates and medals to a class of nurses who have completed their term of training is always a gala occasion, and it is with feelings of unqualified admiration that all friends of the Training School gather together to participate in the mutual pleasure.

The amphitheatre where the ceremony takes place is decked as for a holiday, and presents quite a different appearance from its customary atmosphere of knife and scalpel and operating tables, with students ranged around the tiers listening to the lecture of some distinguished teacher. In lieu of students with notebook

and pencil, there are tiers upon tiers of brilliantly dressed women and scholarly men, representing every calling of eminence in New Orleans. The amphitheatre is beautifully decorated with palms and waving ferns, great ropes of evergreens are twined about the balusters and balconies, and mingled with these is the fragrance of roses. A lovely floral design of white jasmines and pink carnations, representing the motto of the Training School, "Faith, Hope, and Charity," hangs just above the rostrum. In the rear of the platform, shaded by palms and ferns, is the musicians' bower, and lovely music is discoursed during the exercises. Seated upon the platform are the administrators and the medical staff. The Sister Superioress of the Training School and Miss Agnes O'Donnell, Superintendent, occupy seats near those allotted to the graduates-elect, and then, in a moment of great excitement, the twenty-one graduates enter, eleven of them wearing the demure garb of the Sister of Charity, the other ten robed in the white and blue striped seersucker dresses, with dainty white aprons and white muslin frilled caps, which are the regulation garb of the School.

THE SALUTATORY.

To our Southern ears the salutatory which follows, and which is admirably delivered by one of the graduates, is inspiring and euphonious. Its "local colour" may appear somewhat too florid for you self-contained Britishers, but it appeals to our warmer and, may I say, more sympathetic natures.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Our Dear Friends,—Among the many professions adopted by womankind and into whose forms the much-talked-of 'woman movement' has crystallised itself, the one of trained nurse stands distinctly apart and challenges universal attention.

Its followers are widespread and its results indisputable. Theirs the right to work quietly, though none the less effectively, that to the outside world, and particularly to the innumerable women who are working separately for the elevation and happiness of their sex, this day must be one more of triumph.

The duties of the household, the discussion of the social topics of the day, or progress in the untalented arts, leave no impression, and are but short-lived marks of merit.

Our vocation has the emphasis of a scientific standing, and is undying.

Organisations of whose making there is no end, count their membership in every section of the country and spread their influence everywhere.

They hold great annual conferences, where lawyers, doctors, ministers, reformers, artists, journalists, and business women speak, listen, and then depart to carry the information, encouragement, and impetus thus gained, as to the needs or activity of the sex, into their own local work.

This is our halcyon day, one wherein these auspices lend to its enchantment.

Our graduates enter into their chosen profession with the buoyant heart of hope, and with the pleasure of a calling that has become a part of their lives.

This carries with it the moral of industry, mental adaptability and the enthusiasm for good.

It is not a success of fortuitous circumstances, but the fact that Nursing is a profession, and in it there is much to be learned.

It entails responsibilities that are grave and anxieties that tax very thoughtful consideration.

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