

organisation, and notwithstanding the foundation in 1879 of the "Association des Dames Francaises" and in 1881 of the "Union des Femmes de France," although it possesses considerable stock and important pecuniary reserves, it is still, so far as the nursing staff is concerned, behind other nations.

Dr. Colomb points out that while there are theoretical courses, conferences, and some practical exercises for a few months each year for those who take up this work, to be efficient in time of war it is necessary that they should receive instruction which is essentially practical in all its details, and which can only be acquired in the course of a prolonged residence in a hospital.

It was France, however, which first grasped the part played by medicine in the introduction of civilisation. M. le Dr. Ch. Conte in yet a third thesis (published in 1904) "On auxiliary doctors and district nurses" recalls that, during his Egyptian campaign, Bonaparte created hospitals whose influence was assured by the foundation, in 1827, by Dr. Clot Bey, of a medical school, the object of which was to render medical and pharmaceutical aid to the Egyptian army, and the organisation was completed by the arrangement of courses of instruction for veterinary pupils, midwives, and barber vaccinators. In Madagascar and Tonkin the provision of medical assistance has also been considered a powerful method of attaining peace and civilisation. Midwives and vaccinators fill in Indo-China the part of the barber pupils of the school of Clot Bey, and a decree of the Governor-General dated August, 1903, regulates the programme of the studies and the organisation of the two courses for male vaccinators and nurse-midwives.

In Tunis also, a school of Arab male nurses has been established and accorded Government recognition, and it is hoped to found one or more such schools for women nurses. Such women should prove invaluable assistants to the medical service, as they would be admitted to the homes of the Arab ladies, from which men are rigorously excluded.

In the second part of his thesis Dr. Comte describes the valuable services rendered by English nurses, after the completion of their hospital training, to all sections of the civil community, and he desires to develop in France a system of district nursing similar to that in force in this country.

The last thesis is that maintained by Dr. Marc Blatin, before the medical faculty of Paris, in July of the present year, on "The Lesser Medical Personnel in England, Reforms to Introduce in France," and which has since been published under the title, "Medical Care. Nurses, what they are in France, what they are in England, and what they may become."

Dr. Blatin, who was admirably qualified for the task he undertook by his knowledge both of religious and of lay nursing, by army experience, and by his acquaintance with English hospitals, shows that if the hospital service in France is insufficient as regards nurses, in connection with the

civil population, it is almost non-existent, with the exception of the case of a few large towns, such as Bordeaux, where there are a small number of both religious and lay nurses capable of giving skilled care to the sick of the civil population.

The author showed that until the middle of the last century nurses in England were scarcely more highly esteemed than they are to-day in France, but that Miss Nightingale's work had completely altered the situation. Nurses in England to-day are of good education and well taught. The instruction they receive is both theoretical and practical, but above all practical, its essential basis being a permanent residence in a hospital.

Dr. Blatin lays special emphasis on the importance of private and district nursing, and indicates the many spheres open to nurses, and in which they have rendered good service. He then discusses similar work in France. Reform is, he says, essential in France; it is necessary to convince public opinion of this. France must do as well as England. Nurses must take the place which they have already taken in other nations, but to attain this it is necessary to procure nurses socially, intellectually, and morally superior to those who are at present engaged in hospital work.

The Administrative Commission of the Bordeaux Hospitals is impressed by the harmony of the ideas expressed in the series of theses which have been so ably summarised by Dr. Lande. Under the old system little care is taken in the selection of nurses, and the conditions of work are such as, with some honourable exceptions, to attract only those who find it difficult to obtain any kind of work. The new school of nurses at Bordeaux, in connection with the Hospital of Tondu, addresses itself to another *clientèle*. It demands proof of its pupils before they are accepted, of the possession of unimpeachable moral qualities, and of good education. In confiding to the Directress of this school and her head nurses the management of the hospital, the Administrative Commission has complied with the requirements desired by Dr. Blatin.

The Administration of the Bordeaux Hospitals has, however, been outdistanced by the administration of the Maison de Santé Protestante in that town, where for the last three years Dr. Hamilton has afforded a practical illustration of the work accomplished by a nursing school organised on modern lines.

It is from Miss Hamilton, says Dr. Lande, that he has more specially learnt the necessity and the urgency of an alteration in the secondary *personnel* of hospitals. "I am," he says, "pleased to render her this homage, that to her should belong the honour of having pointed out the imperfection of the reform effected in our country since 1882, and of having proved by her acts that it is easy to obtain in France results which will compare with those of which she has afforded an example."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)