

## The Modern Nursing Movement in France.

To be in earnest is one of the supreme factors which sooner or later commands success, and when Miss L. Chaptal, the Directrice of the Maison-Ecole d'Infirmières Privées, was good enough to look us up at our hotel quite early on the first day of our visit to Paris, and in the kindest manner placed her wide knowledge of nursing affairs in France at our disposal, and offered us help in our task of organising the forthcoming Conference of the International Council, you may imagine that we greatly appreciated her energy. With Miss Chaptal came gentle Mme. Gillot, who, as Mlle. Pigeon, was so well known in times past at the great Salpêtrière Hospital, and who, as founder of the first French nursing paper commands our gratitude. Many of us, who have been watching the growth of interest in social work amongst the educated women of France, know that Miss Chaptal has for many years spent her whole life for the benefit of others, and that, having gained practical experience in various hospitals as a nurse, she has given her time specially to studying the nursing question, and doing her part practically in evolving a system of training nurses in the Paris hospitals to fit them for private nursing. How helpful and how kind Miss Chaptal was to two strange insular persons, speaking the most elementary French, it is needless to say, but through her good offices we saw much which might otherwise have gone unnoticed. Our time was short, so the blessing of an automobile and a cicerone were invaluable. Under such happy conditions it was wonderful what one could do in a day.

### L'HÔPITAL BOUCICAUT.

First then to l'Hôpital Boucicaut, a very fine hospital, erected and equipped by a fund left for the purpose by the late Mme. Boucicaut, of Bon Marché fame. Here Dr. Letulle, the well-known physician, and his little flock of white-coated students did the honours of the medical side. Nurses still superintend the nursing in this institution, and the staff is supplemented by pupils from the Maison-Ecole—as we passed through the wards we saw them on duty, and very bright and happy they appeared in their useful environment. It is useless to deny that to the trained English eye the nursing in this hospital—one of the best in Paris—was faulty. The wards were greatly overcrowded from our point of view, and there were other defects of a sanitary nature which, no doubt, in time will be improved. One thing was at once apparent—medical and surgical science were carried to a very high condition of perfection by the medical faculty, and one noted the contrast with conditions at home. Whereas in England, in every good hospital, our nurses are exquisitely clean, just out of the wash tub as it were, and our honorary medical staffs still do their rounds in woollen garments unprotected, in this French hospital we found the nurses' garments were in many instances unwashable, and their appearance far from neat, and on the other hand

every doctor, from the *chef de service* to the youngest student, was carefully dressed in white-linen garments from head to heel. Indeed, when we were introduced to the great surgeon, Professor Nélaton, who showed us the surgical side, we found his hair covered with the most cunning little white "glengarry" cap, herring-boned in red, a charming souvenir of our visit, now in the possession of Miss Stewart!

We left the hospital after a most interesting inspection, much impressed with all we had seen.

### THE NEW NURSING COLLEGE.

How often have we dreamed of and advocated a Nursing College in London, where pupil nurses could pass through a preliminary course of study, where the examinations of the Central Nursing Council could be held, and where post graduate education would be possible. Some day it will exist.

"We must just pass through the portals of the Nursing College at Salpêtrière," we pleaded, and in half an hour we were there. A splendid building, containing large lecture halls, studies, and innumerable rooms—but by no means finished. Little imagination was required however to fill it with life and learning.

### THE MAISON-ECOLE D'INFIRMIÈRES PRIVÉES.

A few years ago Mme. Taine proposed the organisation of a school for training educated girls to become private nurses. Miss L. Chaptal threw herself actively into the work, and the Baroness James de Rothschild became President of the Committee of Direction. This school is now situated in a charming house, surrounded by gardens, which was at one time a convent in the Rue Vercingrétorix. Here one day we took tea with Miss Chaptal and Mlle. de Saint Escupery, in the pretty sitting room, and we were then shown over the house. The late chapel makes a fine lecture room, the pupils have several bright rooms for work and play, and either single bedrooms or dormitories, and the domestic offices were exceedingly well fitted. Here in a charming little kitchen they study invalid cookery, and in France such food is exquisitely appetising. The pupils reside at the school, and learn their theory there, where they have a well thought out course as follows: Care of Medical Cases, Dr. Letulle; Practical Surgical Nursing, Dr. Guibé, Professional Hygiene, Dr. Got; Nursing Ethics, Mlle. Chaptal.

The pupils acquire practical knowledge as day visitors to various hospitals, including the Maternity Hospital. They leave the Home early, and are on duty at 7 or 8 a.m. in the wards, and put in a good long day's service. Only well educated girls are admitted for training, but under four different conditions. It is the aim of the school to be eminently practical, and everything is done to inculcate respect for their work, to surround the pupils with an intellectual and moral atmosphere, and to imprint the charm of home life on their environment.

Miss Chaptal is doing all in her power to contribute to the success of our Conference, and will, we feel sure, accord all those who attend it, a warm welcome to the Maison Ecole d'Infirmières.

E. G. F.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)