

amongst the reforms M. Mourier intended to accomplish. At the end of that year the building of the School at the Salpêtrière was decided upon by the Paris County Council, who granted a loan of £40,000 for the purpose.

M. Mesureur said that the School for Nurses would become conspicuous amongst other older professional schools, such as the School of Physics and Chemistry, the Teachers' Training School, and the School for Midwives. He continued: "I cannot recall without feelings of emotion the anxieties and anguish of the first days. The reliance placed in us by the City of Paris made us feel strongly the whole weight of our responsibilities. . . . The International Congress of Nurses in June, 1907, brought to Paris the most remarkable women from foreign hospitals; they visited our then uninhabited school, and the question in our minds was—Was France, so far behind on the nursing question, going to lead the way with the School at the Salpêtrière?" I must say that encouragement and sympathy came to us from every part of the world, but we had to deserve and justify them. We had to prove that the maintenance of a high moral standard in the school was not necessarily dependent on the aristocratic or religious character given to certain schools in large provincial towns—we had to fight against the prejudices which inevitably sprang up amongst our own staff against the pupils of the school on the ground that they were privileged. This was a great error.

"The only privilege we claim for them is that which they will acquire by their work and character—that is to say, the superiority given them over the past by their dignity and personal knowledge. It is wrong to say the promotion of nurses at present on duty would be imperilled by the school, which could barely, in thirty years' time, fill the actual 2,000 vacancies for head nurses, nurses, and assistant nurses."

M. Mesureur described the "cool welcome" the new pupils received when they first went into the wards. "They were not needed, they could sit down." Then, to their great joy, the hospital maids were told to sit down, and the pupils made to do their housework and cleaning. M. Mesureur paid a warm tribute to the Matron, Mme. Jacques (*née* Duconseil), who was not in the least alarmed. "Beloved by the pupils, she knew how to reassure them, to uphold them, while bearing in mind the end we were aiming at. She knew that she had my full approval, and that the watchfulness of the Director of the Board of Charity was exercised daily upon the school, and he who

performed this daily guardianship in my name and under my orders, with a rare competence, and with ardour for the success of the school, is of my own flesh and blood, and too dear to me for me to be able to thank him."

By the tireless energy of Mme. Jacques, the briars obstructing the path were uprooted, and the aspect of things changed. M. Mesureur relates that "in six months the Salpêtrière looked down smiling on the blue ribbons, and our pupils, by their gentleness, their ardour for work, their good manners towards our head nurses, and their irreproachable behaviour, won their places beside the sick bed."

Now M. Mesureur receives numberless letters from directors and members of the medical staffs of hospitals, seeking to retain these pupils, asking for others. This satisfactory result had been attained by very simple means. M. Mesureur said:—"We followed in our teaching principles and traditions which can never disappear from the Paris 'Board of Charity'; we reminded them that, according to St. Vincent de Paul's words, they were 'the servants of the poor,' and that, to serve the poor well, they ought to know all that can alleviate their physical pain and allay their moral suffering; that no task was servile when attending the poor; that aversions, weakness, bashfulness, must be put on one side where the life of a fellow-creature is concerned; that, to fulfil this mission, the nurse must possess to the utmost degree the essential qualities of gentleness and patience, must despise danger, be scrupulously clean, morally and physically, be fond of household order, and value highly her personal dignity."

The Director explained that the pupils of the School now do all the work of their Home, the domestic staff having been abolished with a stroke of the pen. He concluded:—

"Our pupils will, on leaving this school, be enlightened as to the problems that agitate the world, and especially on the painful questions of vice and misery, which are the chief agents in filling our hospitals. They will only remember that they fulfil the most honourable and humane of public missions; that they are, for those who suffer, the delegates of the City of Paris, the bright colours of which they wear so proudly in their caps, in order to accomplish a work of social solidarity. Later on, if they choose, the English nurses will no longer be the only ones to be cited; the renown of the 'Salpêtriennes' will increase and spread afar; they will have added to the magic spell of France abroad, and thus enlarge the moral patrimony of their native land and of the French Republic.

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