

When many hearts were beating, many candidates were aspiring and applying for the direction of the new school, the one who least thought about it or imagined herself eligible, was chosen. Her name was Mdlle. Duconseil, and she was one of the *Surveillantes* at the *Maternité de Paris*. She had been suggested to M. Mesureur by the Head *Surveillante*, Mdlle. Hénault, who was on the point of getting married and leaving the profession, and who is now Madame Lefèvre. Amidst the very greatest difficulties and opposition M. Mesureur had built this College, and now came the critical moment—to whom was he to trust his scheme? It was *everything*, it was *all* to him, to find the right woman. Again, amidst criticism and opposition, he decided on Mdlle. Duconseil. That his choice was a right one, that she was the right woman to fill the requirements of a most unique position is indisputable, or Mdlle. Duconseil would not be there now as Madame Jacques. I attended

soul which must command wherever she goes; in addition must be mentioned a grasp of the hand which would draw anybody to her from the highest to the lowest.

I went into the new massage department, which has been recently fitted up for the purpose at the *Ecole* itself, and saw her giving her practical lessons to the pupils, on the patients who are sent from the various hospitals, as well as many of the aged women from the *Salpêtrière* itself.

She, too, wore the French brown holland blouse, and looked equally business-like; but her grand and beautiful mind soon overshadowed that look; one felt the influence of this distinguished woman on pupils and patients. There were some of the roughest navvies, looking like prize-fighters, and some of the lowest types of humanity there, who had come for treatment. They had given their arms or legs a good scrub before coming into her presence. Miss Procopé went from patient to



The Nursing School of the Assistance Publique, Paris.  
The Massage Class.

her lectures on physiology and anatomy, and she was nothing short of perfect; while her late teacher, Madame Lefèvre, lectures on childbirth and the care of infants in an equally capable manner.

The last, but by no means the least, of this remarkable trio is Miss Procopé, the Finnish lady, who is Professor of Massage. Both M. André Mesureur and Madame Jacques had spoken to me of her in terms of the deepest admiration and respect—of her charm, her culture, and her distinction, but even that did not prepare me for what I saw when I first met her. Perhaps if I were to introduce her as a childhood's friend of Baroness Mannerheim, it will give an idea of the stamp of woman she is. Tall, stately, brilliant in colouring, she has the carriage of a queen, and a mind and

patient with that look and touch which only the master hand and mind can give, giving fresh instructions to the pupils and encouraging words to the patients. When she got to the new cases, which the doctors had sent her without any diagnosis or instructions, one again felt how completely she had mastered her profession; with a glance, a touch, the diagnosis was made and the instructions given.

The pupils I saw at work were the second year nurses, who had already gone through their theoretical studies; and the patients who were there were those who were able to get about; those laid up in the different hospitals were attended there by the nurses. I saw one of them, a paralysed man, at the *Hôtel Dieu*, being massaged. Not only was he being cured, but he was being kept spotlessly and immaculately clean—

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)