

de facto, had asked and obtained permission to work as Miss Baxter's pupil.

To quote the *Corriere d'Italia* :—

"The Duchessa d'Aosta asked the Directrice of the Blue Cross, Miss Grace Baxter, for permission to work as pupil in the Gesu e Maria Hospital, where the nurses' training school is placed.

The noble lady on entering the hospital, asked to be treated like all the other nurses, and she asked this with so much sincerity and firmness, that her request had to be granted.

She goes every morning to the hospital, and dons the regulation Red Cross uniform, working with the other nurses and performing the humblest offices.

She already knows how to clean and disinfect surgical instruments, how to bandage wounds, and give hypodermic injections."

I wrote to congratulate Miss Baxter on having a royal pupil, and to ask how the "tirocinio" had gone off. She has just answered—after some delay, owing to extreme busy-ness—that it had been a most satisfactory experience. To quote her letter :

"Last year, as you may remember, all the Neopolitan Red Cross ladies came here to get their practical training under my supervision, and worked with my own regular Blue Cross nurses for the time specified by the Red Cross programme.

"This year, when war broke out, Her Royal Highness the Duchessa d'Aosta, who is always to the fore when there is anything useful to be done, and who had gone through the Red Cross courses before, passing her examinations like the other ladies, came to this hospital for the specified period of practical work.

"I found that she had a very fair amount of experience in nursing, besides a very marked tendency for it. She sticks at nothing, not even the dirtiest work, which she does with the ease and simplicity of one long inured to it. When I remember the tenderness and ability with which she nursed our sick, I can easily picture to myself the comfort she will be to the wounded soldiers."

The Duchessa lunched daily with Miss Baxter and her pupils in their modest "study—refectory—lecture room," gave all the children dolls and toys, paid a woman's journey home, bought milk for another, pulled a ribbon from her bodice to tie a little girl's hair, and evidently did all the delightful things which our Florentine Red Cross pupils of happy memory did for the earthquake patients.

Miss Baxter adds that she read in the papers that Her Royal Highness had taken the direction of the operating room on board the "Menfi," and that on a post card which she had been graciously pleased to send her from Tripoli, the Duchessa had said they were all working very hard, and added playfully : "I try to be a credit to you."

Miss Baxter adds that "three of her nurses are dying to go to Tripoli, that they had offered their services and been refused."

The truth is that, *as yet*, there is no place for

trained nurses to work in. The Croce-di-Malta steamer has called on nuns to help the *infermieri*, the Red Cross steamer has the Red Cross volunteer ladies. So many of these offered themselves, that there has been no possibility of finding places for professional nurses. In some towns the ladies have drawn lots as to who should be the lucky ones to go. I hear that Fate has not always arranged for the numbers drawn to be those of the ladies who are most suitable. As there has been no uniformity of teaching, each town having its course of instruction arranged by one of its professors, one fears that there may be "differences" in the other sense over the organising of work as there must certainly be differences in the way they execute the *art of nursing*. The best story I have heard so far, *re* the Red Cross training of ladies, is that of the Siena branch. The doctors declared they would all go on strike if the ladies were admitted to the wards, so the Direttore was forced to withhold his permission. As the Siena Red Cross nurses (heaven save the mark!) have therefore received only theoretical teaching, it is devoutly to be hoped that they will not be allowed to begin to practise on their wounded compatriots.

Here in Rome the ladies have worked for some months in the military hospital; and in Florence, Lucca, Milan, etc., they have some chance of practising nursing in hospital wards. But only at Naples have they had the advantage of even the briefest training by a certificated nurse. It is only to be expected therefore—should the war continue, that the doctors (perhaps one from Siena?) will urge the engaging of trained and competent nurses, and that the authorities will then appeal to Miss Snell and Miss Baxter to provide them.

M. A. TURRON.

POST-GRADUATE LECTURES AT GUY'S HOSPITAL.

On Tuesday, November 14th, Mr. Davies Colley gave his first lecture on "New Methods of Treatment in the Gynæcological Wards."

He advocated the administration of morphia gr. one-sixth, to be injected before the operation, as it was found that the patients took the anæsthetic much more easily, and there was less sickness. Lysol was the antiseptic considered the most effectual in these cases, both for douching and for use during the operation.

In cases where it was necessary to keep the bowels confined, albumen water only should be given for the first four days, after which jellies, meat juices, beef tea, &c., leading up to full diet as soon as all danger is over.

Hæmorrhage and sepsis were the complications the nurse should watch for, and in cases of extensive plastic operations, especially with elderly women, insanity was no uncommon thing, the chief signs being sleeplessness, delirium, excitability and delusions, which were followed by the more acute forms of insanity.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)