

OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

NURSING IN GERMANY.

DEAR EDITOR,—So many things have happened in the German nursing world, about which I want to tell you.

You know that our Cologne Conference was followed in October by the biennial meeting of the German National Women's Federation in Gotha. A whole day was given to nursing affairs and Her Highness, the young Princess of Sachsen-Koburg-Gotha, a niece of our Empress, came every day to follow the reports and discussions. It was again "overwork" and "better training." Frau Oberin von Keudell, a Red Cross Matron, who was in Cologne, gave the report on three-year-training, and it meant a good deal for her to stand up for that, as the President of the Federation of Red Cross motherhouses, of course a man, and a former judge too, thinks that Red Cross Nurses do not need a State examination, which is only good for "free nurses," and the Red Cross never had more than six months' training till State Registration came.

I give the resolution verbatim:—

RESOLUTION.

"The growing importance of nursing in the social development of the German nation imperatively demands an extension of the period of training to three years, with due regard to domestic economy. Motions to this effect should be brought before the authorities concerned. Also, a proof of qualification on the basis of special training and examination, must be demanded of persons applying for posts of management or as instructors.

"In order that nursing may become a life-profession, the preservation of the health and strength of the nursing staff must be aimed at, through shortening the hours of duty, and increasing the staff, through separating day and night duty, and relieving from heavy domestic work, and through a sensible development of the material and ideal life conditions of the staff.

"A careful local, national and international organisation of nurses should be furthered with the greatest energy, as only by such an organisation can that self-help be developed which is necessary to the attainment of these aims.

"Special attention should be directed to the daily increasing abuses in private nursing. In order to check them, the authorities concerned should be called upon to make the admission to private nursing dependent on the evidence of having passed the state examination and of at least three years' practical experience, to enforce the licensing of nursing homes, and only to grant the license to qualified nurses with at least five years' experience, in order that the public may be protected against the inexperience and moral inferiority of nurses.

"It is most desirable that competent women should be elected for the municipal commissions for hospitals, in order to bring about reforms in the nursing profession. In addition to the

Prussian inquiry regarding the nursing institutions, an Imperial inquiry should be demanded. At the same time the nursing associations should be granted a hearing with regard to their judgment."

A tour of lectures and inspection followed the Gotha Conference. I travelled then to Magdeburg, Zeitz, on to Stuttgart, Ulm, Offenbach, Frankfurt-on-Main, Heidelberg, and for a few weeks to Zürich to read the third and fourth volumes of "A History of Nursing," and began to arrange the material for my Leipsic lectures. I had to come back to Berlin in the beginning of January, as on January 11th our Association completed its tenth year of work.

We had a lovely banquet, splendid living pictures, again St. Elizabeth, St. Gertraud, the two Beguines as in Cologne, very sweet and beautiful all of them, quite different, of course, more simple but very lovely, and everything arranged and done by our nurses. After these a group of modern nurses brought a wonderful banner with our cross in red on shimmering white silk, the name of our Association in black around it, at the top the motto of our Association, "*Per aspera ad astra*," and beneath, between 1903 and 1913, our second motto "*Ich dien*" (I serve) in gold. The superb embroidery was much admired and the nurses from the Province of Pommerania gave a banner-ribbon in blue and red (the colours of their Province), embroidered in gold with the emblem of their Province, an eagle's head, and the motto "Aspiration." Our Saxonian nurses brought 500 marks in gold as the nucleus for a scholarship for our Leipsic courses, and seven nurses from Danzig had sent 14 marks for the same fund. (Since then it has increased to almost 1,000 marks, and, only think, 100 marks of it came from Dr. Kimura, the Japanese interpreter, who left for his own country a short time ago, but hopes to come back for good with his sweet young wife in some years.)

Then followed another quite new set of living pictures from "A History of Nursing": Friederike Fliedner, bathing her child and welcoming two new probationers, a simply wonderful Sairey Gamp, and your own Florence Nightingale "the Lady with the Lamp," sweet and womanly in the midst of her wounded soldiers. I believe the whole thing was again very German, sweet music given by nurses too, and a happy 400 of them had gathered from Berlin and the whole Empire for our Red Letter Day. Dr. Keilmann and his wife, a former Sister, came from Riga, Russia, Dr. Poelchen, the head of our training school in Zeitz, Dr. Jacobssohn, whom you may remember, from Cologne. Later in the evening merry dancing followed, and in between a jolly little play in verse, composed by one of our nurses, and acted by six of them, "A Proof Examination." They had gathered from all our hospitals a set of droll answers given in the real exams. It was a good thing to see, that enough spirit was left in our hard-working nurses to get up all this for our festival and to enjoy it as thoroughly as they do their work.

And then we all went back to face our work and battle of life, and hard enough it was. I hope

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)