

A PLEASANT HOLIDAY.

There are two conditions necessary to a Nurse's holiday if it is to be a success; these are, complete change of scene and society, and an absence of worry. It is not a real holiday if you have to wrestle with a Bradshaw, worry about lodgings, order meals and so on.

I had these things in my mind when I decided to take a holiday in Brittany; and a further inducement was the thought that no one need know my profession, and therefore no one would regale me with tales of marvellous operations and terrible temperatures. Some people think that nurses like to talk about these things, but there is one comfort, we are not the only sufferers; a dentist friend told me once that even his partners at dances told him all about their decayed teeth.

My destination at Brittany was the Guest-house of the Co-operative Holidays Association at Dinan, and it was this fact that simplified matters so greatly, I sent the Association five pounds, and in return they sent me a ticket, and instructions as to time of departure. Obeying these instructions I arrived at Waterloo at eight o'clock one Saturday evening. I found a train with several compartments labelled C.H.A., and a crowd of holiday makers on the platform. One of the crowd was acting as host, and every one talked to every one else without any introductions. There were about forty of us altogether, and amongst the number were two hospital nurses, two newly-fledged B.A.s, (one a lady) one B.Sc., and several teachers, shop assistants, post-office clerks, and one honeymoon couple. The rest, like myself, were enjoying a happy oblivion as to their calling in life.

We left Waterloo about 9 p.m. for Southampton, and from there crossed to S. Malo. Some of us had breakfast on board, and then we went to see the town. S. Malo is a magnificently fortified town, and though thickly populated is still contained within its protecting walls. The houses are high and the streets are narrow. There is a Cathedral, which looks more like a fort than a church. Duchess Anne had a house in S. Malo, and Chateaubriand and Duguay-Trouin were born here; but the most interesting thing to us in S. Malo that Sunday morning was a very excellent luncheon provided for us in one of the hotels. At this meal we were warned not to drink water, and told to take instead mineral waters, or cider. Personally I like the Breton cider, but most people call it vile names.

After lunch we went to our head-quarters at Dinan, an old town on the beautiful river Rance. People say that the Rance is as lovely as the Rhine. As to this I cannot say, because I have not seen the Rhine, but the Rance is the most beautiful river I have seen.

Villa S. Charles, our guest house, was once a monastery. It stands in a large garden, at one end of which is part of the city walls, for Dinan was a walled city once. On the top of this

particular bit of wall are several trees, and from these are suspended seven hammocks. The house is very plainly furnished as to bedrooms and dining-room. The drawing-room is charming, having a good number of really easy chairs, a piano, pretty pale grey walls, French windows, and always the whisper of the wind in the palm trees outside.

We were welcomed by the hostess at the station, and by the Manageress and her assistants at the Villa as though they were really glad to see us, and all through the holiday they gave us the impression that we were very welcome guests.

Excursions were planned for every day except Sunday and market day. All arrangements were made for us; breakfast and dinner were moveable feasts to suit our going out early and returning late. Our luncheon we had out-of-doors, picnic fashion. Tea we had to buy ourselves, except on the days when we had no long excursions, but this was not a serious item. The evenings were devoted to games and singing. One evening in each week we held an "At-home," our visitors being some of the French people of Dinan; this gave us an opportunity of rubbing up our French.

The excursions were always to different parts of the coast, or to places on the river. The coast scenery is very grand, and the sea was always a glorious blue-green, though this may have been due to the brilliant sunshine we had all the time.

One of our excursions was to Mont S. Michel where we had lunch at M. Poulard's. (Everybody on the Mont seems to be a Poulard.) We had eleven courses for luncheon, including the inevitable omelette; no visitor goes to Mont S. Michel without eating omelette. Everyone has heard of Mont S. Michel, a fortress, a prison, and a church. One cannot at first admire the wonderful architecture for thinking of the terrors of that awful prison. The big church is not used now, but it is all kept as a show place; and the cloisters alone are worth going all the way to Mont S. Michel to see. The little church, half-way up the Mont, is very interesting. In it are a black Virgin and Child, and a very beautiful altar to S. Michel, and it has a tiny graveyard. There is only one street, very steep and very narrow, the houses almost meeting overhead. Some of the houses are roofed with wooden tiles, and all of them appear to be shops for the sale of refreshments, curios, postcards, and cheap jewellery to visitors. The tide was out, and one could see miles of sand, reputed to be dangerous. At some seasons of the year the tide is said to come in faster than a horse can gallop. Just inside the entrance to the Mont is an old cannon and some balls, left there by the English. There are two accounts given of this occurrence: one is, that we left them there because we had no more use for them; the other, that they were taken from us during one of our attempts to storm the Mont. You may choose, according to your nationality, which you will believe.

Dinan market is a great sight. Everything is sold there, and it spreads over a great part of the

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