

historians the oldest of all the Orders of Hospitallers. The Order received as members not only knights who had shared in the wars of the Crusades, and who desired to devote themselves especially to the care of lepers, but also those who had been themselves stricken with the dread disease. There were two bodies of knights—the warriors and the hospitallers—and there were also Sisters of the Order. It was obligatory that the Grand Master should be a leper of noble family, a rule only abrogated in 1253, by special permission of Pope Innocent IV, all lepers of noble birth having perished before the infidel.

The first Knights of St. Lazarus, in Jerusalem wore a plain cross on their mantle (of which the colour is not known), with four arms of equal length, somewhat flaring at the end. The French Lazarus cross was an eight-armed golden green or purplish red cross, with tiny golden lilies in the corner. The Italian insignia were white and green. The emblem of the Order of St. Lazarus has in recent times become the heritage of the German Nurses' Association.

It is to the heritage of the associations of the Order of St. John that the nurses going out to care for the sick and wounded under its auspices are now succeeding, and, great as is their devotion, it can never exceed that of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, Rhodes, and Malta, who have preceded them. Their special contribution to the Order is the trained skill which, with all their devotion, the Knights and Sisters of the Order in the Middle Ages did not possess. We do not doubt that the white cross of the Order which they wear will stand as the symbol of all that is highest and best in nursing, the sign of skill, tenderness, and consolation, to those to whom it is their privilege to minister.

### NURSING AND THE WAR.

On Saturday last we received a post card from Brussels (posted at Antwerp) from one of Miss Cutler's Staff, with the following good news: "We are all well and are working in the Hospital St. Pierre, Brussels. We are under German rule, so hear no news, as we arrived the day before the Germans."

This will be a great relief to the friends of the little corps of fourteen nurses, who were so fortunate as to be able to respond to the call of Dr. Marcelle just in time! Let us hope that Miss Thurstan and her band of nurses are equally fortunate. We never feel great anxiety about nurses on active service, as their common sense and courage will usually carry them through most emergencies.

Several contingents of nurses have been sent to Antwerp and France since our last issue, and the greatest sympathy will be felt for those who were sent to Paris one day—but for some reason were compelled, presumably by the War Office, to return the next. Especially as the services of trained nurses are most urgently needed in France. It is heartrending to think of all the suffering which might be relieved, if the Red Cross Society had been ready for the present crisis, instead of organising its trained nursing department after War was declared. Nurses who have seen the need in France have a very sad tale to tell. Quite frankly had we been one of that band—given the chance to relieve this terrible suffering one day, and deprived of it the next—we should have been "missing" when the roll for departure was called.

Many nurses unable to speak French are suffering disappointment, as the St. John Ambulance Association has intimated that those who have not this qualification are ineligible for active service abroad. There is no doubt that to be unable to understand the language militates enormously against the usefulness of nurses deputed to duty in foreign hospitals, and unless learned in youth it is most difficult to acquire.

Immediately the War broke out, a patriotic idea occurred to several of the members of the Association of Superintendents of Nursing Homes, i.e., that they should, through their chairman, Mrs. Stabb, offer one or more beds in each Home to the War Office for wounded officers.

Those members who were not away on their holidays, were approached on the matter and the suggestion was received with enthusiasm. Quite a number of beds have therefore been placed at the disposal of the War Office, and the offer has been accepted, though just at present the beds will not be needed. When they are, the British Red Cross Society will communicate with Mrs. Stabb, who will act on behalf of the Association, and be able to allocate patients where convenient. Separate offers of single beds in different Homes could not have been so easily available at an hour's notice, so the Association has already proved its usefulness in a national crisis, and in a way little dreamt of when it was formed.

This is very encouraging to those who felt the need of organization in this branch of the nursing profession and worked to attain it. So much may be done through co-operation, which is not possible to attain in any other way. Army officers are seldom rich men, and this patriotic offer of Nursing Home Superintendents will, we know, be interpreted in the most generous manner.

Quotations from the diary of an English nurse in Brussels, kept since the fateful August 19th, published in the *Morning Post*, gives a very graphic account of life there from day to day. Just one little item referring to the German

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