

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT.

FROM PARIS.

A Nurse writes from Paris:—"One wonders what Florence Nightingale would say if she could arise from the dead and see what a travesty is being made of her beloved nursing in this War. It is more like a Gilbert and Sullivan opera than a sane condition of affairs. The only person who is resented on all sides is the thoroughly trained, skilled hospital nurse, who knows her work, and either resents, or is hugely amused at the army of masqueraders to be met on all sides. It is not too much to say that all these amateurs attempt to keep the professional woman from coming near the wounded by every means in their power, and

a mere trifle, and there are many other trifles of a *most irritating* nature! No one wants to be taught. To help dress a wound, to bandage, yes, beyond such items, nursing does not exist. Everyone here is a trained nurse who holds a Red Cross diploma, and the fact that so many untrained girls have been sent to France, holding no other qualifications, from England, is, I regret to say, being now quoted in justification of inefficient standards here, and makes one very indignant. It seems as if Florence Nightingale lived and worked and agonised over the sick and suffering in vain."

FROM ANTWERP.

"My first ambulance in Antwerp was in a beautiful house just outside the walls of the town. The



CHATEAU DEN BRANDT, THE HOUSE OF ALBERT PREGLINGER.

as for the majority of doctors, they either support them from self-interest, or simply go distracted in attempting to maintain discipline, which, of course, amongst all these contentious females they cannot do. One quite young woman—girl, in reality—with heaps of money is running a hospital on her own. She has never been trained for a day, but wears full nursing canonicals, and just provides everything up-to-date for treatment the doctors need, so is in high favour, and is now quite the *Directrice*. 'Oh, you English! how stupid you must be to have to spend three years in a hospital before they will give you a diploma. We are not like that, we others; we have so much *esprit, finesse*, such drudgery would be time wasted for us.' The risks they run, it is astounding. As for the patients, only hands and faces are washed, no draw-sheets, no mackintoshes. Bed sores are

big reception rooms with the large plate glass windows and wonderful ceilings had all been turned into wards, and equipped for the comfort of wounded soldiers down to the smallest detail. Every bed had beside it a chair with a linen case, containing hair brush and comb, a tooth brush, and a pair of slippers. What a place to get well in, with the sunny gardens, and green stretches of lawn. One found it difficult to think of war—the scene was so peaceful. The moated house, and the quiet sheep grazing in the meadow seemed so far removed from the din of battles. As a matter of fact we did hear the distant booming of cannon, but it hardly disturbed our tranquility and the men listened only to talk of their recent fights, and the improbability of the town being taken.

"One night we had a rude awakening in a very

previous page

next page