

FRENCH FLAG NURSING CORPS.

Two members of the French Flag Nursing Corps left London for France on Tuesday morning last, Miss Dora Barlow, cert. Holborn Infirmity, returning to Caen, and Miss Dorothy Chamberlain, cert. General Hospital, Lowestoft, who holds the certificate of the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses, proceeding to Talence.

Sir Thomas Barclay, writing in a contemporary on "English Nurses and French Patients," says:—

"The French medical chiefs soon discovered the difference between the British hospitals and their own, between the clean, bright, joyous British nurses, the air of comfort of their wards, the flowers, that sense of optimism which radiates as it were from all 'labour of love,' and the slovenly, sullen male nurses, &c., and they determined to see if they could not borrow some of these fine women for the French hospitals.

"As the French fighting line is some twenty times as long as ours, it is easy to understand what the position is when I say that the French army is out of all proportion behind us in nursing facilities. For the vast requirements of a war on the scale of the present one all available accommodation had to be commandeered.

"General Troussaint (the head of the French Army Medical Service), tried a few English nurses in his hospitals—I am speaking only of the official hospitals under the direct control of the Ministry of War—and found them so useful that he tried more, and eventually he determined to ask England for 300 of them. This led to the forming of the French Flag Nursing Corps. A committee in London recruits them, and the lady whom General Troussaint entrusted with the task of organisation is now the Inspectress-General, charged with the control of some 200 nurses belonging to the corps scattered over some twenty of the French official hospitals.

"These ladies are all professional nurses, and as servants of the French Government are paid the moderate salaries the French Government is in the habit of paying to its public servants. They get also a small allowance for uniform and outfit, a part of their travelling expenses, and, of course, are housed and boarded while in hospital. The rest is provided for out of the slender means of the London Committee, which, without ostentation or parade of any kind, is rendering to the French wounded one of the noblest services among the many fine things the English are doing for their Allies.

"The French soldiers themselves love their English nurses. They say the nurses are so cheerfully compassionate, so skilful and attentive, and so clean, that the patient never tires of watching them. Even their broken French is a joy that makes the hours shorter.

A PERSONAL VISIT.

"One day when I visited a hospital, two nurses were solemnly engaged in cutting the poor fellows'

overgrown toe-nails. One of them was passed over. '*Mais, mademoiselle, ne veut-elle pas couper mes ongles aussi?*' he asked, almost piteously. The poor fellow was not expected to live more than a few hours, but the nurse cut his nails all the same, and it seemed to make him happy.

"Nothing daunts these English nurses. When Bergues was shelled, and the fever hospital had to be evacuated, there were not men enough to do the lifting, and the English nurses bravely, amid the falling shells, carried away the beds and their occupants to places of greater safety.

"Their one wish is to get closer to the firing line, to be right up in the danger zone, and to secure their patients from the moment they fall.

"All this endears them to the French, and I have before me a letter from General Troussaint, in which he speaks of the admirable service rendered by the corps, the gratitude felt towards them by surgeons and patients alike, and expresses the hope that England will send more of them to his hospitals.

"There are difficulties; we may want as many as we can have for ourselves. But that should not stand in the way, because we evidently do not need at once all we have, and, meanwhile, they might be helping the French.

"These mutual services are one of the redeeming features of this terrible War; and in bringing the French and English closer together, the English nurses, the French surgeons and their French patients are laying the foundations of a nobler sense of fraternity than even co-operation on the battlefield—for, curious as it may seem to the civilian at home, the Allied armies see little of each other and know still less."

Miss Grace Ellison, *Déleguée du Ministère de la Guerre* in France, and the representative of the Committee of the French Flag Nursing Corps in an appeal in the *Daily Telegraph*, writes:—

Our nurses are caring for over 5,000 French wounded every day, and the more widely the work is known the more highly it is valued; for, until now, France has had little experience of the skilled nursing with which we are acquainted.

In the name and at the express command of the Minister of War, General Troussaint, the head of the French Army Medical Service, referring to our work, says: "I should like to pay a sincere tribute to the devotion of your nurses. They have given our medical staff most valuable assistance. Their well-directed energy, their generous self-sacrifice, have never waned." I quote these lines from one of the large number of letters of appreciation sent in by our medical officers, in which our indebtedness to the British nurses for their loyal co-operation is recognised, and I hope my letter may help you in the personal efforts you are making in England to obtain further support for your movement."

Miss Ellison has prepared a series of interesting articles for publication in the above paper, which will be read with interest.

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