

## OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

## LETTER VII.—ECHOES OF THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE.

DEAR MADAM,—Some recent issues of the JOURNAL, including June 26th, have interested me exceedingly. The account of the doings of the National Council on the 17th July is deeply interesting and edifying. How I wish "A Scheme for Social Service in Relation to the Soldier" could have found a place on the programme of the Nurses' Convention at San Francisco. However, many of our American sisters will read it, and I know this fine progressive scheme will meet with their approval. I seem to hear them say, as I often have when anything appeals to them strongly, "That's fine."

In my last letter I told of the great joint meeting of the three nursing bodies held at the Greek Theatre of the University on the afternoon of June 23rd. I must now make a short retrograde step and tell something of the morning sessions, especially one in particular, which was too interesting and too important to be passed over. Miss Genevieve Cooke presided over a meeting of the American Nurses' Association, which dealt almost exclusively with the work of the American Red Cross Society, which is well organised and has done excellent work during the present war. The concentrated essence of America's high sense of duty as a neutral country is contained in the following words written by Dr. Janus A. B. Scherer, President of Throop College:—

"With us the gift of consecrated imagination must take the place of propinquity. The very fact of our own immunity from suffering should make us the more zealous to enter into sympathy with the afflicted, and to give to them out of our bounty. The Red Cross is the spirit of Christ organised. There is no nobler cause in the world. Its motto is 'Humanity, Neutrality.' It is not based on sentimentality, but on sensibility to human pain." When one hears and reads of all that America has done, and is doing for the sick and wounded of the fighting nations, one trembles to think of what our position would be if the war party in America got their way. I must tell you that there is a branch of the Red Cross work in America which is unknown to us namely, the "Red Cross Town and Country Nursing Service." An admirable paper upon the subject was presented by Miss Fanny F. Clement, Superintendent of a branch of that service in Washington. I was a little puzzled to know the precise nature and purpose of this branch of the service, and the explanation given me was that the American Red Cross Society believes in activity in times of peace as well as in times of war and disturbance, so two years ago this branch was established. The generous gift of £20,000 from a New York citizen made it possible. There is no overlapping with the work of the visiting nurse (district nurse) because her work is done in large centres, whereas the nurse employed by the Red Cross Town and Country Service

carries on her work in districts of not more than 2,500 population. It appears to be an efficient aid society to District Nursing. The Russell Sage Foundation is specially interested in the Rural section of the Red Cross Society.

During the same morning in another hall of the building a Conference on Teaching in Training Schools took place, under the auspices of the National League of Nursing Education. Miss Noyes, its president, was in the chair, so I divided my attention between the two meetings.

Miss Harriet Gillette read a paper which admirably illustrated in itself, to use her own words, the value of "organized thought," on "How to Help Pupils to Study." Her opening remark was the key to the whole theme, and its great moral significance is worth memorising, namely: "It should be every nurse's aim to be the best nurse it is possible to be." In the course of her remarks she enumerated certain important factors in study, such as: (1) Recognition of the problems; (2) The gathering of data bearing on the problem; (3) Memorisation; (4) Application of theory; (5) Pupils should be encouraged to search for books bearing on the problems, this will help them to *search for knowledge*.

"Keep a careful watch," said the lecturer, "over Nursing Journals"; furthermore, she impressed upon her hearers the necessity of *organized knowledge*. "Knowledge that is not organized is soon lost." Another remark that impressed me was that *thought, too*, must be organized, and that the ready acceptance of everything in print, shows lack of thought. Among Miss Gillette's many words of wisdom, I must just quote three more which it will do us all good to remember: "Pupils must *think for themselves*," that it is necessary to "establish the habit of verification." "Some one has said that '*good memory is really good thinking*.'" To sum up, or to put into tabloid form, the lecturer's theme, she urged her hearers to cultivate what is understood by the scientific habit of mind.

A very interesting paper was contributed by Miss Estaiene M. De Peltquestangue, of Massillon, Ohio, the subject being, "Indian Nurses and Nursing Indians." Especial interest was attached to this paper because Miss M. De Peltquestangue is a member of the Kickapoo tribe of Indians, and is at present a nurse among the Indians. She is a graduate of Cleveland Hospital.

"Training School Records" was the subject dealt with in a paper presented by Miss Pickhardt, Superintendent Pasadena Hospital, near Los Angeles, and one of our kind hostesses. Miss Parsons opened the discussion upon it and described what appeared to be a very perfect system of records which obtains in her hospital—the Massachusetts General, Boston. I must draw this letter to a close, it looks too long already. At this moment I am staying with an English Nurse, now married, who has in the past sent contributions to the Journal, and has a great respect for you and Miss Breay, she is now Mrs. Sheppard.

BEATRICE KENT

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