

trary, incurring the constant obligation of obscure sacrifices not so much of material things as of their most legitimate professional *amour propre*.

But by accepting the posts of ordinary nurses the certificated nurses have been able specially to benefit the combatants by their skilled care. If it is useful that an operating theatre should be well served it is certain that the wounded in general do not realize the importance of this, and that they appreciate infinitely more being surrounded in the ward day and night—especially night—with attentive care, for they are only temporarily in the operating theatre and the rooms for the dressing of wounds, but in the ward in which they live there is an imperative need of competent nurses. Former pupils are therefore advised to leave the theatres and dressing-rooms to the care of students of medicine, and to concentrate themselves on the wards where they have an infinitely greater power of assuaging suffering. "What more beautiful rôle" it is asked "could they have than to prevent the aggravation of the condition of the sick in their charge; to assure order, calmness, cleanliness, in a word the hygiene of the day and night service in order to expedite rapid recovery, and to save the lives of those who, severely wounded, are at the mercy of indiscretions due to defects of supervision, or in the capacity of the *infirmiers*?"

Emphasis is laid on the fact that the work of nurses is primarily to care for the sick and not to be inferior doctors, and that in concentrating their efforts on the well-being of those who suffer they must become the most valued assistants to the medical profession. It is in attendance at the bedside of the sick, especially when the doctor is not there, that they truly fulfil their vocation.

Evidently there has been the same influx of untrained women into hospitals in France since the war as in this country. "There is," we read, "no question of proving a vocation, as special as it is rare, to consecrate oneself to the service of the sick. All the women, all the young girls have taken the hospitals by assault, and while their fathers, their husbands, their brothers, are occupied in fighting the enemy they only think of surrounding the victims of war with their solicitude.

"May they realize that a hospital environment, if new to them, has always presented a great attraction to those who have explored it, and that the victims in the battle of life who are to be found in hospitals in time of peace are also in imperative need of care and consolation.

"Let us hope that when victory has been attained we shall see the hospitals permanently supplied with a feminine personnel so superior that we shall no longer have reason to envy our allies, the English, in this respect."

Several of the nurses in the invaded regions have had the terrible experience of working under German majors. One of them who had received four wounded men into her house removed them to hospital under fire for fear that they might be shot if the Germans found them else-

where and had to pass a barricade to return home.

"The following day," she wrote, "the Prussians were established as masters in the hospital, and I returned there, in order not to abandon our poor prisoners. . . . What a Calvary for me! You know me! . . . Think of the French under the orders of a Prussian major, and what a Prussian!—the purest essence. I have had to assist, impotent, at acts of barbarous surgery. After eleven days of this hell, we saw this savage horde depart, not daring to believe in such good fortune.

"During this cruel period, it was necessary to carry on the work of the hospital, full of wounded, daily renewed, without water, gas or electricity, and with the drains obstructed owing to the bombardment."

Another of the nurses was on duty in the Palais Royal, at Brussels, when the Germans arrived. After working under the direction of the Germans for thirty-seven days, she escaped. The wounded French and Belgian patients had been sent to Germany, and the French and English nurses were being exposed to the same fate.

The nurse, therefore, with three English ones, decided to take matters into her own hands, notwithstanding the warnings of the United States Consul, who feared a fatal issue for them. (It was the same Consul who afterwards made such strenuous efforts to save the heroic Edith Cavell from the death sentence.) The four disguised fugitives had their carriage followed by aeroplanes, but by traversing by-ways arrived at Nimore, whence they took the train to Ghent, but were stopped by the German lines and the train being bombarded had to retrace their way and arrive at Ghent by an indirect route, from which place they left for Ostend and finally for England.

In other invaded districts, former pupils of the school have been captives for many months. In one place, the directrice and sous directrice had been at the hospital for several years, and remained at their posts. Indirect news has been received of them that they are well treated by the German majors, who marvel at the way in which they care for the patients.

At Bordeaux, thanks to its pupils, the Nursing School at the Maison de Santé Protestante is performing truly patriotic work. We congratulate Dr. Hamilton that the seeds sown with so much care have brought forth fruit—some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold.

It was announced at a successful public meeting, held in Sydney, on March 8th, that Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Shaw had given their beautiful house and grounds, at Summer Hill, as a permanent home for the trained nurses of Australia, as a lasting memorial to the memory of Miss Edith Cavell, such memorial to be associated with the good work done by Australian nurses at the Front. A good fund will be required to equip and to maintain the home, and Australasian nurses are invited to interest their friends in it. Subscriptions to the amount of £239 5s. 9d. were announced at the meeting.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)