

artificial leg preparatory to joining the French Flying Corps.

The following letter appeared recently in the *Morning Post*, signed "Royal Red Cross," and dated "A Hospital in France." It is headed "Ungracious Officialism," and the point of it is that decorations which were to have been bestowed by the President of the French Republic upon Scottish nurses were delayed because of a cast-iron rule of the British Foreign Office. The writer says:—

The President of the French Republic has spoken to over three hundred and seventy French wounded, in simple fashion, often putting a friendly arm round the neck of a young soldier or stroking his hand. Madame Poincaré has given to each man a kind word and a present tied up with the tricolour ribbon.

We now await the final ceremony. The President is to bestow the Legion of Honour upon our countrywoman who for two years without a break, and with skill and devotion beyond praise, has acted as "Médecin Chef" of this wonderful hospital. Ten other decorations are to be given among her helpers. The British Staff Officers present—half a dozen of them—are proud of these Scottish women, who have deserved so well of the Allied Armies. The *mise en scène* is perfect. The Gothic cloisters, the roses trailing round the plashing fountain in the centre of the quadrangle of the monastery founded by St. Louis, the bright Scottish and English girls' faces above their blue dresses, the scarlet of the coverlets over the wounded who are lying round the great cloister, and the dazzling white of their pillows. It is again the Tricolour of France, the glory of her quiet corn-fields in peace and of her bloody battlefields of the Somme.

Gratitude lights up the eyes of the men, tenderness those of the women. Admiration for the lady who has been the life and soul of the hospital, who is its chief surgeon and wise administrator, warms the hearts of all. The President regrets. . . He says farewell, with warm expressions of gratitude on behalf of the French nation and the French Army, echoed by M. Godard, the Under-Secretary for War, and by the French Generals and doctors present.

But, the Legion of Honour?

Well, the pretty ceremony, in which the French delight and excel, cannot proceed.

A new rule has been insisted upon. No English subject can be decorated on the field of battle for service rendered to France unless the name and service are approved by the English Foreign Office. Telegrams have been sent to London in vain. It takes at least three weeks to move Downing Street. Besides, the British send their decorations by post. "*C'est plus pratique*," say the French.

#### WORD FOR THE WEEK.

We went into this war with clean hearts, we have fought it with clean hands, and let us come out of it with clean souls.—*Robert Blatchford*.

### FRENCH FLAG NURSING CORPS.

Miss Marion Ramsay Parsons, cert., Royal Hants County Hospital, Winchester, left for France for service with the Corps on Saturday, October 7th. The Corps has now been at work for two years and has gained a high reputation through the skill and devotion to duty of the Sisters.

The officials of the Anglo-French Committee of the British Red Cross Society have intimated—we presume, with the approbation of the War Office—that thoroughly trained and certificated nurses may not now be sent to nurse our brave wounded Allies in France, but that vacancies in the F.F.N.C.—and, we presume, in other organizations—may be filled by sending "partially trained" women into French military hospitals. We hasten to reassure the certificated Sisters of the Corps that their Committee will neither break its honourable contract with the French Government, to supply certificated and experienced nurses, nor its moral obligations to the highly skilled women who have joined this Corps, by adopting such a suggestion—as they realise that by so doing the prestige of the Corps would suffer irreparable depreciation and failure result. "Partially trained" nurses are usually failures who have not completed their training for one of the following reasons: They may have broken down in health—that is their misfortune; they may have proved temperamentally unsuited for nursing the sick; or too stupid to attain the necessary skill and pass examinations; or their moral character may not be reliable.

That these failures should be considered eligible for service in France, as substitutes for trained and certificated nurses of high moral character, demonstrates once again the necessity for effective professional control of all military nursing. That all efficiently trained nurses available are required at home for the care of our own sick and wounded need not have been the case, as hundreds—if not thousands—of well-trained nurses in our Overseas Dominions could long ago have been secured by the War Office, if the quite justifiable expenditure of transporting them to England had been guaranteed.

Anyway, only the best nurses are good enough for service in the F.F.N.C., and none others will be offered through its medium as worthy to care for the heroic sick and wounded French soldier who is fighting our battles as well as his own.

The following letter has been received from M. Lugon, of the Hôtel de France, Chambéry (Savoie): "I am happy to inform you how pleased I am my proposal has been accepted by the Committee of the F.F.N.C. If the few days of rest some of your nurses have taken here help them to bear the strain of their charitable work, my aim will be attained, that being my only possible way of contributing to the relief of the suffering this War is causing."

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