

NURSING AND THE WAR.

We offer hearty congratulations to Miss Kate Carruthers, trained at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, who has been awarded the Military Medal, a decoration highly prized by nurses because it signifies devotion to duty under fire. Now that the Royal Red Cross is awarded to clerical workers and others who have not been on active service, it has largely lost the significance which it bore in the reign of Queen Victoria, when it was given to nurses but rarely, and for work done on active service. As a member of the Territorial Force Nursing Service, Miss Carruthers was one of those called up for duty at Stobhill on the mobilization of the members of the Service on the outbreak of war.

At the end of 1914 Miss Carruthers was sent to France, and since Christmas Day of that year has been engaged in nursing at the front; on November 15th last she was working at a casualty clearing station behind the British lines when it was bombed by an enemy aeroplane, and one bomb struck the camp in which Miss Carruthers and her patients were located. Most of them were instantly killed, and she herself was wounded in the head and legs; nevertheless, though suffering much, she remained on duty until relieved twenty-four hours later, attending to the surviving patients. When she went off duty she was sent to hospital, where she remained for some weeks. She was mentioned in despatches by the Commander-in-Chief for her bravery. It is an interesting fact that her twin sister and her brother are both serving with the Forces.

The colleagues of Nursing Sister L. W. Burns (wife of Colonel G. E. Burns, of the Canadian Army Guards), will unite in expressing to Colonel and Mrs. Burns their cordial congratulations on the award of the Military Cross to their only son, Lieut. Edson Louis Millard Burns, of the Canadian Engineers. In addition to organizing and running the signal lines, he personally laid and repaired armoured cables under very heavy fire, displaying great courage and coolness throughout.

Do not miss reading "In a French Hospital: Notes of a Nurse," by M. Eydoux-Démians, translated by Betty Yeomans, and published by T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. The "nurse" is one of the voluntary workers whom the needs of France drew to the Hospital of St. Dominic in October, 1914, on the reception of a message from Sister Gabrielle of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, which ran:—"A large number of wounded have just arrived. We can't take care of any more ourselves, and the moment has come to call for volunteers. I shall expect your help."

The author's interest in hospitals is indicated in the brief dedication, "To my five brothers, wounded in the service of France"—small wonder that she wished to serve the soldiers of France, those soldiers "who have brought back in their

very flesh the frightful scars of the enemy's iron, those who have cemented with their own blood the human wall that is now our frontier. They have come back, not with their courage drained, broken down, horror-stricken, stunned—not at all. They forget themselves to talk smilingly of the great hope in which we all share. They are touched, deeply touched, by the few hours of fatigue we undergo for them each day—for them who have given almost their lives."

We cannot resist the following extracts from the description of Sister Gabrielle, one of whose three brothers serving with the colours, a quite young captain, met with his death on the field of honour. "No one around her would have guessed her sorrow. Possibly her smile for the patients that day was a little more compassionate and tender than usual. . . . But no matter how compassionate Sister Gabrielle may be, she never carries it to the point of feebleness or softness. Her bearing with the soldiers is an indefinable mingling of something angelic, maternal and virile, all at once. These men, brought in from all points of the immense and terrible battlefield, become at once her children (and never was a mother more watchfully solicitous and devoted), but never does she forget their sacred title of soldier. She must not stir up their feelings, she knows. She sets herself, on the contrary, the essential secret task of keeping up their moral strength, of helping them, after the enemy's fire, to meet the ordeal of the operating-room, the wearing suffering, perhaps, at last, death.

"Sister Gabrielle would like to save them all. What a task! What a struggle! She is on her feet night and day. The orderlies are told to call her at the least disturbing symptom, and when they do, with true motherly enthusiasm she, who is always helping others to bear their heavy burdens, herself awakens, tireless, to her own sad duties. In the semi-darkness of the room, she prepares hastily the serum that may prolong a life; she utters the sweet words that are dear to souls who suffer thus at night. It may be one o'clock, two o'clock, in the morning, but when four o'clock sounds, her night is over. Lost in the long lines of white cornettes, she takes her way to the chapel, there stores up for another twenty-four hours the strength to go on with this superhuman mode of living. Behold in her a soul that is truly the mistress of the body which it animates."

It is good to know that repatriated prisoners who have returned from Ruhleben to this country speak warmly of the kindness they have received from the Sisters at the Sanatorium.

It is reported that on Hindenburg's last visit to the Western Front, the medical officer of a large hospital visited by him explained that the Sister attending some wounded English officers spoke English perfectly. He immediately commanded that she should be replaced by one who did not know a word of English.

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