

## QUEEN'S HOSPITAL NURSES' LEAGUE, BIRMINGHAM.

The Fifth General Meeting of the Queen's Hospital Nurses' League was held in the Recreation Room, Queen's Hospital, on January 25th. Mrs. Bekenn, the President, took the chair, and there were present the Treasurer, Secretary, and 33 members, a smaller gathering than usual, owing, no doubt, to the increased cost of travelling and to military duties, which kept a good many away.

After the ordinary business, a report was given on the final decision which had been arrived at by the Executive Committee with regard to the Memorial Tablet, which is in due course to be erected in the Hospital Chapel by the Past and Present Nurses, in memory of Miss Buckingham, late Matron of the Hospital and Founder of the League.

The design is in coloured mosaic and represents the "Good Shepherd."

After the meeting tea was dispensed in the Nurses' sitting room, and later the members were entertained to a performance of "Between the Soup and the Savoury," acted most ably by three of the Sisters.

Eight Sisters and Nurses forming a Pierrot Troupe gave excellent songs and solos.

With much applause and after a most enjoyable reunion the members dispersed.

### JOINT WAR COMMITTEE.

The following nurses have been deputed to duty abroad:—

*Egypt.*—Miss J. Parkes, Miss A. M. L. Faden, Miss E. C. Pearce, Miss A. W. Hodgkinson, Miss M. Keley, Miss M. Dight, Miss T. Stubbs.

*Italy.*—Miss E. E. Maskell.

*Boulogne.*—Headquarters: Miss M. Munro, Miss M. Rowlatt.

## THE PROCESSION OF REPATRIATED FRENCH.

(FROM THE *Journal de Genève.*)

Since last Monday, the procession of "repatriés" has continued, and we have waited anxiously, knowing only too well that it would be more painful even than formerly, because these exiles have suffered invasion during twenty-seven months before deciding to leave their villages.

It is still night, and snowing. The quiet group appeared on the station of Carnavin. Shivering silhouettes in the dawn, bent outlines, bowed with burdens; and one could so well guess that they were even more bowed by the invisible troubles they carried with them. Details escape one's notice. One sees confusedly women—always women—a baby in their arms, children holding on to their skirts, and often tottering grandparents.

The procession crosses over, descends the hill,

and the dark shadows are silhouetted on the white road where the snow gleams. Those dark and silent shadows are so like those which we have already seen march past one year ago, two years ago, that the vision of the interminable catastrophe imposes itself, near and terrifying. The procession of victims continues without ceasing. This one appears representative of all the rest. The confused shadows conjure up the memory of the refugees from the North and from Belgium, torn from all they loved; or the sad procession of Roumanians flying from an invaded country. Processions of pain stretching across Europe, continuing always their despairing march—yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow.

The clear voice of a child holding her mother's hand had said, "We have no longer a home."

Skirts brush the snow; boots are soaked through. One old woman has fallen. Trivial, painful details which accentuate the general distress.

Three little children walking together—three sisters who travel alone, the eldest perhaps ten years old. She holds the youngest by the hand. She is crying because she has lost her coat which held her money. They come from Meurthe-et-Moselle. They had known strange lodgings. Some had seen their families killed. They had asked to leave because they were afraid of the future—afraid of starvation—afraid that they would not be able to keep their children, for already young girls were not allowed to leave, nor boys over twelve. The comfortable rooms of the public kitchens gather them together. They make the little ones sit down—families of five, seven, and ten children, harassed mothers and confused grandparents.

The three sisters settled themselves, the eldest with her thin little face covered with tears. Old in experience, she assumes a defiant attitude to declare, "My coat? Certainly it has been stolen." Besides her there are also two other lonely children, the eldest seven years old, who answers nothing—bitter and sad. And every morning and every evening it is the same march past—children without parents, women without husbands, old peasants, those who are ill—a procession of wrecks.

We have, however, seen some of these travellers smile when they tell us of their journey through Switzerland. They repeat the names Schaffhouse and Zurich, for these have become for them names to be loved. And they repeat what others have said months ago, two years ago, with a smile which lights up their faces, "The Swiss have given us new heart. Our children will remember them always."

The same welcome, the same gestures, hands stretched out to the victims—all that begins again. Those passing processions, following an inexorable rhythm; fragments rejected by the great wave and thrown upon the shore. What an example of the permanence and greatness of the curse! That procession which passes every day, twice a day, becomes a tragic sight from which we cannot turn our eyes.

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