

NURSING PROGRESS IN FRANCE.

MY DEAR EDITOR,—I'm sure your readers would be glad to know your friends in Bordeaux celebrated your fortieth "professional" birthday by wishing that this year your efforts for the organisation of nursing by the State in Britain will be crowned with success, and that the story of your long and hard fight with the powers that be will soon find its place amongst the nursing classics in the library here.

You cannot tell what it means to the nurses here (whose splendid Directrice, Dr. Hamilton, has every day some fresh difficulty, some almost insurmountable obstacle placed in her way) to know that the privileges the British nurses enjoy have not been bought without paying a heavy price, and that you more than any living woman have paid that price. Here we know your story from Miss Dock's account of you. It takes an American to appreciate good things nowadays, don't you think?

It's so splendid for a while to be far from the fighting line and only to read of the bombs and shells of Paris. Every time the papers speak of an air raid in London, we all immediately conjure up a picture of you and Miss Breay working against time (cotton wool in your ears) to bring out your weekly journal. The pupils here, who are always deeply interested in their journal, appreciate it more since I have told them under what trying conditions it is born, when bombs are falling and the barrage crashing overhead.

At the present moment we have fifty poor gassed patients from Verdun. They are victims of the latest Hunnish abomination—a gas which smells like chocolate, and only has its ghastly effect half a day after. It affects not only their eyes and throat and ears but their stomachs; their faces are terribly burned, and all night long they cough and cough. Fortunately, here, they have the disciples of Florence Nightingale to give them every comfort, poor souls! It is *touching* to hear their gratitude.

Dr. Hamilton has begun a new work, which rejoices in a terrible name, "the taking of blood" (*prise de sang*). But what a splendid work! When I am well enough to attend the lectures I shall send you an account. Babies six months' old are brought here, and a specimen of their blood is taken to see which of them have inherited syphilis, and then they are treated accordingly. The work is too new for me to tell you what you will ask at once, the percentage of the poor little victims, but I fear it is terribly high. What a birthright! Poor little, skinny, rickety infants! It's splendid to think that here this effort is being made to give the little things a chance all the same.

Another good thing that is being done here is to allow future soldiers to take advantage of the classes and learn "first aid." Don't you think it should be part of a soldier's military service? Imagine the good he can do to himself and his comrades when the elements of hygiene and anatomy and dressings have been taught to him.

The new probationer this week is a future pastor, if God spares his life. The Sisters give a very good account of him and say he went through his baptism very well. He held the patients operated on for "adenoids" and never turned a hair. He and his mother are most grateful for the opportunities of learning to save life which he is enjoying.

Dr. Hamilton has most enthusiastic letters from her Sister, who is the guest of the U.S.A. Government in Cincinnati, and the American papers are full of her work for the French wounded at the Front. She is the one of the party most appreciated, since she occupies the largest space in the articles written about her. And yet only a nurse! I should say "only a *professional* nurse"—to echo the words of a well-known society amateur worker (so well baptised by Florence Nightingale "fashionable ass") who could not believe the daughter of a *Senateur* would come here and take a professional diploma when she might have soared to the dizzy heights of being a good Red Cross worker. It's so fine to see how America has at once picked out and honoured the *professional* woman. What a splendid example for the people here, who in spite of the lessons war is supposed to have taught, still look down on the *paid* worker.

I enclose a letter from another pupil here who is doing such good work under the American Red Cross at Lyons. I know it will interest you.

G. E.

[We shall publish the interesting enclosure next week.]

IMPERIAL NURSES' CLUB.

The Imperial Nurses' Club, 137, Ebury Street, S.W., was looking its best last Monday, when its Patroness, H.R.H. Princess Beatrice, attended by Miss Mina Cochrane, paid it her first visit. Her Royal Highness was received by the Chairman, Mrs William Scott, and the Lady Superintendent, Miss C. H. Mayers, and proceeded to the drawing-room, where members of the Committee were presented, as well as four visitors to the club who had been decorated by the King with the Royal Red Cross on Saturday:—Miss Ross, Matron, and Sister Kennedy, Night Sister, of the Hope Hospital, Pendleton; Miss E. M. Smith, Matron, Withington Infirmary; and Miss Burgess, Crumpsall Infirmary, Manchester.

The Princess then visited the new extension, where there is accommodation for ten additional nurses; one of the rooms by permission of Her Royal Highness, is named "Beatrice," and a signed portrait, presented by her, hangs over the mantelpiece. "Beatrice," the blue, rose, and willow rooms, are single rooms, each—as the names indicate—having a different colour scheme; while the green and violet rooms have three beds in each and are provided with screens in colour to tone.

The only meal taken in this house is breakfast, breakfast in bed being the order of the day. Miss

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