

## DEVASTATED FRANCE.

A Sister writes from the devastated districts in France:—"Everything that can be spared can be used here for the immediate welfare of the people—it makes one's heart ache to see the ruin and misery brought upon these brave, uncomplaining people by the wanton destruction of the Hun. Do get everyone who can spare either money or kind to send it on to the Comité Britannique, F.R.C., 9, Knightsbridge, London, W., and ask them to express the wish that gifts shall be sent to their missions now being organised. We can do with any amount of clothes and comforts of every description."

The British Committee of the French Red Cross is diverting the whole force of its energies in this direction. The Committee has established missions in various centres with stores of clothing, bedding, furniture, cooking utensils, &c., which are working in close collaboration with the local authorities. Attached to each centre is a dispensary with fully trained nurses and V.A.D.'s to help the French doctors with the many cases of illness resulting from years of privation. In the districts of Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing large quantities of clothing, boots and bedding are being distributed by the Committee's representatives, working in conjunction with the local French Relief Societies.

Several of the F.F.N.C. Sisters are now taking up this district work as the military ambulances are being closed. Sister Mary Sutton, and others, have been requisitioned by several devoted French women who knew their work during the war, and it is hoped next month they will return to France to work in the Missions of the Comité Britannique, with Princess d'Alsace, Mile. Des Garets, Madame Panas and others. It is good to read the praise

lavished on the Sisters by Frenchwomen who watched their devotion during the war.

A Sister writes:—"We are right in the heart of the old war zone. Most interesting. Last week Sister W—— and I went to Reims, in a camion. It really is heartbreaking to see such a beautiful and historic city in such a deplorable condition. Hardly a house intact, but I was pleased to find that the beautiful old cathedral has not suffered as much as is reported, especially the exterior.

The civilians are already beginning to return and trying, poor things, to make the relics of their former homes inhabitable.

We spoke to one lady who lived just opposite the cathedral. She said they had saved their money and possessions mostly, and could live comfortably in the South of France, far away from the sights of war, but she and her husband had returned purposely to Reims to reinstall their house, hoping to set the example to others less fortunate than themselves. She was so proud to say that the Boches had not been allowed to enter Reims (except for the few days at the beginning of the war), and that their one aim in life must be to rebuild their town,

to show the Boches they were undaunted. There you have a perfect specimen of the wonderful unconquerable spirit of this wonderful race. There they were well-to-do people, and getting on in years, had lived in their cellars for four years, and only left when forced to, and returned at the first opportunity, to live from choice in a house with no roof, and eat at the public kitchens with hundreds of other unfortunate neighbours for pure love of their country."

Another Sister writes:—"It will be a great change to work amongst civilians, and in peace times, but I leave France with an immense regret, as there is nothing like suffering for drawing hearts together, and never shall I have the same pleasure again as I have had in nursing the 'poilus' of France."



FRENCH FLAG NURSING CORPS SISTERS IN THE DEVASTATED DISTRICTS, FRANCE.

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