

PROTECTION REQUIRED FOR RED CROSS NURSES.

We referred briefly last week to a pamphlet entitled "Appeal and Case for Members of the Nursing Staff of the Scottish Red Cross Hospital, Rouen," which is addressed to the contributors of the Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross Society.

The case of the Sisters is that in March, 1918, ten of them on the staff of the above Hospital, under the administration of the Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross Society, were summarily and unjustly discharged from France, after, in the case of most of them, more than three years' service. The cause of their dismissal was that nine of their number had written a joint letter of protest, in January, 1918, over the projected report, by the Matron, to Glasgow of the remaining Sister, Miss Helen Johnstone, for her dismissal, without, as they thought, good reason.

Counter charges were made by the Matron personally to the Chairman, against the Sisters of alleged disloyalty to her over a period of two-and-a-half years.

Frankly, after this lapse of time, we see little hope of the complaints being effectively dealt with. But the lesson of the case is plain—that, before undertaking professional work, members of the nursing profession should insist upon just contracts of service under which their interests are protected.

This journal has persistently warned nurses against the danger of putting their professional reputation at the mercy of lay committees without such protection; but during the war, nurses have not only failed to insist on proper contracts but have too often consented to work under untrained direction.

We are entirely in sympathy with the Sisters in objecting to secret reports concerning them being sent to their Committee. It is a fundamental rule that officers are entitled to have any charges made against them communicated to them. Not holding this rank, Sisters in Military and Red Cross Hospitals have no such protection.

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

"THE MATCHLESS MAID OF FRANCE."

On Sunday last, the Pope announced the coming canonization of Joan of Arc—of all heroines in history, most worthy of honour, most courageous, most loveable. Well may England and France unite to honour "the Maid," and in the new understanding which has come to them as comrades in arms, salute this daughter of our Ally.

Speaking to a representative of the *Observer* of the appropriateness of the Passiontide season for emphasising the Catholic Church's appreciation

of Joan of Arc, Father Bernard Vaughan said: "Thank God, after our Lord's Passion Life came His Risen Life. The Matchless Maid of France is coming into her own, and her Easter is near at hand. Already beatified, on Sunday next Pope Benedict XV will publicly announce the commencement of her finished triumph in the name of the Church, to which, in spite of her bad experiences from some churchmen in her lifetime, she remained till the end a loyal and loving devotee."

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE PATHETIC SNOBS."*

"The Pathetic Snobs," which is the story of "certain happenings in the second year of the War in the Lives of very Ordinary People," is a very readable and faithful description of the life in any country town, of the narrowed outlook of elderly spinsters of limited incomes, and of the love affairs of Primrose Day Templeton, only child of General and Lady Gracia Templeton—so tractable and well brought up that surely nothing short of the upheavals of war-time would have made her willing to elope with her charming lover, whom her father peremptorily refused as a suitor for her hand. Under the circumstances, we cannot wonder, for pride, or devilry, forbade his disclosing the fact that though only a lieutenant in the New Army recently promoted from the ranks, he was really quite eligible, and his social position equal to that of the General.

The heroine of the book is little Miss Johns, innately a gentlewoman, who lived frugally on a small income, but treasured the Sheffield candlesticks, old lace, and other relics of more prosperous days. We make her acquaintance at the Wessex Hut, where the ladies of the neighbourhood are engaged in supplying woodbines, matches, sweets, spearmint, chocolate, note-paper and other necessities to the soldiers of the local camp.

During the lifetime of her father, a country doctor, Miss Johns had lived in a fairly large house, had known his patients who were the townspeople, and had yearned for something better, "By which it need not be supposed that the exchange which Miss Johns desired would really have been better in itself, but simply that she was looking up to the ideal as she conceived it. All snobbishness comes to that. We struggle upward, grade above grade, pretending to ourselves and our neighbours that we are received in higher circles than we merit, until, let us hope, that some day we may become ambitious of knowing the angels. The pathos of the thing lies in the fact that our present ideals are frequently mistaken, but, despite that, it is better to look up than down. The man in danger, is he who is perfectly satisfied with his position,

*By Dolf Wyllarde. Hurst & Blackett, Ltd., Paternoster House, E.C.

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