

OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS NURSING SERVICE.

DEAR EDITOR.—Having read your item in regard to the forthcoming "History of the American Red Cross Nursing Service," it occurs to me that you might be interested to hear more detail, for I must not allow myself to be regarded as the sole writer of this history.

True, Miss Noyes did, at the outset, ask me to write it, but we had not conferred very long over the contents before it became plain that it would require many hands. It will be a book of two quite large volumes, in several (probably three) parts. The first part I have done. It covers the preliminary historical ground, and outlines the Civil War Nursing, where Miss Barton began her remarkable career. She afterwards made an effort, very interesting from the "story" point of view, to graft the German Red Cross Nursing system upon our American hospitals. The Spanish-American War Nursing was the real starting-point of our present Red Cross Nursing Service, and, after the war, there came on the process of "affiliation" with the American Nurses' Association, all of which makes a narrative quite different from that of any other National Red Cross Society. Then at the outbreak of the war of 1914 comes a section on the "Mobilisation" of Red Cross Nurses, and that contains various sub-sections which have been done mainly by other people. Part II gives the war history—that is being written by Miss Elizabeth Pickett, one of the most talented young writers in the Red Cross administration, and who, though not a nurse, had, all through the war, a position very close to Miss Delano and Miss Noyes, and intimately touching all the movements and the correspondence of the Red Cross nurses. She is doing it exceedingly well. She is young and enjoys the dramatic aspects of the material, whereas I simply could not write up fresh war material, and would not, if I could. My feeling toward war is exactly what it would be if anyone proposed to me the noble virtues and lofty spiritual values involved in the religious ceremonial of eating one's dead ancestors. One seems to me just exactly as necessary and as praiseworthy as the other. It may quite be that, as yet, we can't avoid getting into war occasionally, but all the fine words about it make me ill.

The third part covers the development of Rural, Town and Country Nursing, and the teaching of home women and girls in classes the elements of care of the sick, and of dietetics. It will also describe the Peace Plans of the Red Cross, the International Public Health Service and the Civilian Relief since the armistice, in so far as nurses were busied in it. This part I am again sharing in, though so many others are also taking part that it will be quite a composite. Past and present heads of services and office workers are all helping in this material. Then there is an Editorial Committee, who have something to say

and to do in making all balance and square with facts (and with manners); finally, Miss Noyes herself and Miss Mabel Boardman, who has been so important in Red Cross work since 1905, are the supreme critics. It will be, therefore, a well weighed piece of work, going from one to another for revision and correction. Finally it will be subjected to the Red Cross Bureau of Standards, who will not alter any text, but will decide the form and set-up for the printer. The material for all of my subjects and, to some extent, the rest also, was collected and classified and listed by Miss Beatrice Copley, a trained University woman who was (shall I say "is"? Alas, she became a wife!) an expert in "Research" for work of that kind. As the Red Cross archives and letter-files are simply stupendous in their extent and elaborateness, hers was really almost the most important part of the whole undertaking. The plan for the book was, that it should be a useful "Source and reference" book as well as a narrative. We hope to have the first volume out within the year. The second one will follow later.

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

THE ROOKS' MESSAGE TO THE LABOUR PARTY.

Black folk in lofty places
Much nearer to the sun,
To watch your active paces
Now housing time's begun,
Should teach unfeathered races
How honest work is done!

If building be a sample
Of what you choose to do,
The evidence is ample
"Ca Canny's" not for you.—C. B. M.

[Conclusions arrived at from what I see through my bedroom window of a morning just now.]

COMING EVENTS.

April 9th.—"Isla Stewart Memorial Fund": Meeting of the Standing Committee, 431, Oxford Street, W. 2.30 p.m.

April 13th, 14th and 16th.—London Temperance Hospital: Dramatic and Musical Entertainments given by the Nursing Staff in support of Building Fund. 8 p.m.

April 16th.—Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics, Annual Meeting, 224, Great Portland Street, W. 3 p.m. Social Gathering after the Meeting, 93, Mortimer Street, W.

April 17th.—Verdun Sunday. Special services at St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, and other churches. Concerts at the Albert Hall, and Queen's Hall.

April 28th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Conference on Nursing Education and Alternative and Reciprocal Training of Nurses. Royal Society of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, London, W. 11 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

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