

OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

R.M.S. NIAGARA (at Sea),
1 day over the Equator,
towards the South.

3. 8. 22.

MY DEAR EDITOR,—

Here I am on my journey towards my homeland. So far the trade winds have prevented us from feeling the heat. I hear this is the most agreeable trip over this locality that our boat has had for four years.

When my friend and I arrived in San Francisco, the strike news seemed so serious that we gave up the idea of going across to New York and Boston, and decided to tour California, going as far as Los Angeles in the south, the Yosemite Valley, back to S.F., and then by easy stages to Portland, Seattle, Victoria, and Vancouver, and by this means we would be able, even if the rail employees ceased work, to reach the Niagara by coastal steamer.

At Los Angeles we saw the Pilgrimage Mission Play, and on Saturday morning I called at the Nursing Department of Public Health. Miss Jamieson, in the absence of Mrs. Douglas, was most courteous, and gave me every information possible, even to inviting me to attend a luncheon to be given at the Hotel Clark, at 12.30 p.m., to Miss Clara Noyes, Nursing Directress of the Red Cross. Needless to say I more than appreciated the privilege. There were about 300 present, the vast majority of whom were nurses; the rest were representatives of women's organisations. One medico was present, Dr. Lockwood, of Pasadena. He has always been a champion for nurses, and even chose one for his wife. Miss Noyes gave a forcible *résumé* of the professional basis of the Red Cross. This ideal arrangement was solely possessed by America, until Japan, following the lead, did likewise. A sum of money to be spent in European relief work made the foundation possible, and when she went on to show what had been accomplished in equipping the nurses during the war, as well as the formation of welfare movements in the different war-famined countries, I realised the greatness of the most efficient people on earth. The vast amount of money that the nurses could call upon was amazing to me. One wealthy Boston pupil nurse financed a welfare centre at Warsaw for three years. She also explained that the American nurses engaged in these welfare schemes trained the local nurses, and organised the whole working arrangements, and, with one or two exceptions, were brought back to U.S. on June 30th; the ones left would only remain until the centres were quite soundly established, and so could go on doing preventive work in an efficient manner. She told the nurses that she had taken the linings out of the capes, and changed their uniform outfits, and the accumulated stock she had sent to the European nurses who really could not buy sufficient clothes to carry on. In this respect she said it took a nurse in Austria

10 months' work to buy a pair of shoes. The conditions of living in some of these countries were pathetic in the extreme. What appealed to me was the statement that, there being sufficient money, the Nursing Service would be kept as a permanent force, to be used in times of such national calamities as large outbreaks of sickness, fires, accidents, and so forth, each nurse to be trained in advanced educational work, beyond her ordinary hospital certificate; these women would thus prove that in big crises the national spirit of service was as well developed in them as in the men of U.S., and now, with their suffrage rights, would be truly citizens of the fair land of the Stars and Stripes. When I was introduced to Miss Noyes, I told her I had her spirited reply to Dr. Mayo's suggestion of sub-nurses, of "Why not sub-doctors?" typed and distributed in Melbourne. She asked that I be given some copies of "The Defence of the Trained Nurse," by R. Beard, M.D., which followed hers in the *Pictorial Review* of February. I was pleased to note "he thinks the shortage of nurses, and the conditions that have led to this, must be solved in the end by the nurses themselves. Dr. Mayo wishes to solve it for them. The hospitals have been trying to settle the question for many years, and have failed, because they have left the nurses themselves out of the account." Perhaps you may have read these three articles.

I told Miss Noyes I felt like an ant, and could crawl under a chair when I realised the very ineffective position we nurses hold in Victoria, indeed, in Australia. She bade me be of good cheer, and perhaps Melbourne might begin in a small way to have a purely nursing section of the Red Cross, and no lay authority. Canada is beginning to see what they can do in this respect, she added. I must admit that the nurses present would probably be of a better type, as regards general education and social position, than a similar body of ours would be. I was introduced to a Mrs. Paul, an elderly woman, who has had a private hospital for many years, and evidently belongs to their band of nursing pioneers. I asked her if she knew of the London Mrs. Paul, but she didn't.

We then did the Yosemite Valley. This wonderful place was most fascinating to me. The lore of the original owners, the Indians, and their present state, made me realise the tragedy that has happened here in much the same way as with our Australian Aborigines. The women of the former tribe seem most industrious, and excel in basket-weaving, rugs, and handcrafts. Some of these articles on sale were very finely done and artistic in conception. I would have very much liked a rug, but it was too heavy to carry, and since my left arm is not as strong as of old, I have to allow only for what my right can manage. The men seem to be much more easy-going, and inclined to be spoon-fed by the Government, and it is to the credit of the political party that the Indians are given reservations, and helped to lead industrious and useful lives. Of course this is really little in comparison with the fact of taking their country from them. Upon my return to San Francisco, I called

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