

for we are sending them to Camiers, Deauville, and Zuydcoot on the west coast, to Alsace, to Rambouillet, to the Vienne, in the centre of France, to Switzerland, and to the Pyrenees.

"July 20th was," we read, "a great day for the bourg de Blérancourt. It was, in one sense, a farewell fête of the American Committee to its work in the Aisne.

"The ruined chateau which has served as headquarters for the Committee since the beginning of its work, has been partly repaired, the grounds beautifully laid out, and the whole presented to the commune, as a souvenir of the Committee.

"The fête at Blérancourt held a surprise for our Service, for, quite unexpectedly, the Directrice (Miss Evelyn Walker) received the Cross of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. Naturally, everybody was pleased, for it meant appreciation by the French Government of the work done by this department, and it gave us an official recognition that cannot be denied anywhere. We are very conscious of the honour, and we mean to live up to it.

"We are happy to be able to offer our congratulations to our two patrons, Mrs. Dike and Miss Morgan, who received also, at the fête of Blérancourt, the Cross of Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, and to Miss Scarborough and Miss Perkins, Chevaliers de la Légion d'Honneur, who have had the most difficult and much less interesting task of working for France in America. They have always been very staunch friends of our Service, and nothing could give us more pleasure than to know that they are wearing the little ribbon."

THE CARE OF POISONS.

The precision and observation necessary in discharging all nursing duties is emphasised by a distressing accident and the death of a patient from poisoning self administered, at the Long Grove Mental Hospital, Epsom, through the failure of the bolt of a poison cupboard to enter the socket.

The probationer concerned said at the subsequent inquest that she thought she bolted the door safely, but could not say for certain, as the action was practically automatic, and she went to the cupboard so often.

The Chief Charge Nurse, Nurse Roffe, said she found the door locked, but just ajar, the bolt having failed to enter the socket, and Dr. Martin expressed the view that the door failed to bolt owing to a piece of lint protruding from the bottom of the cupboard.

Surely the keys of poison cupboards should always be in charge of a senior official.

The probationer was exonerated from blame.

THE UNITED NURSING SERVICES CLUB, LTD.

We are asked to draw attention to the fact that the Members of the House and Finance Committees of the U.N.S. Club will complete their year of office at the end of September, and are all eligible for re-election.

Nominations for the new Committees must be made on the proper Forms, which can be obtained from the Secretary, 34, Cavendish Square, W.1.

Applications for Nomination Forms must be made not later than September 1st, 1924, on which date all the Forms will be posted to applicants.

THE NATIONAL HEALTH.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

The Nation is slowly learning the all-importance of Sunlight in raising, and maintaining, the National Health.

Fresh air, pure water, and sunshine, the three priceless gifts bestowed freely on the human race, are the principal factors in keeping the race virile and sound, and it should be one of the first duties of those charged with the oversight of the National Health to see that they are readily accessible to all.

Yet we pollute these gifts, and suffer them to be polluted. Dr. Saleeby, an apostle of sunlight, speaking at the opening of the Imperial Baby Week at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, declared that "the babies of England to-day die mostly in the winter, and they die of the diseases of darkness, especially the darkness that can be smelt and which is associated with the coal smoke of our cities." He instanced rickets, that disease of far-reaching effect, both in childhood and adult life, as a typical instance of the diseases of darkness, and said that "now that we have knowledge there ought to be no more rickets in the world."

It is unquestionable that not only disease but death is caused by the coal smoke of our cities, as every nurse who works in a medical ward of a hospital in one of our great cities—London, Sheffield, Birmingham, Newcastle—during a day of fog well knows. The feeble heart, the damaged lungs, cannot maintain the effort required to inspire the air polluted by coal smoke, the laboured breathing ceases, and by-and-bye the still form in the mortuary bears witness, if not to the primary cause of death, yet to the fact that the chance of recovery is lost, or that death has been hastened by our smoke polluted air—air artificially thickened by the products of imperfectly consumed coal. As we take our walks abroad we note the chimneys, especially the chimney of commerce, belching forth imperfectly consumed smoke, and realize its effects on buildings, clothes, foliage, health and if we ask why is not legislation introduced to prevent this defilement of the air which we breathe we are told that we "must not interfere with the liberty of the subject."

But our legislators have a special duty to the weak and inarticulate, to guard the rights and liberties of infants, the sick and the aged, chiefly to keep free from defilement the essential of life, especially the air we breathe which just now we are considering.

It is well that at Wembley a practical illustration should be given by the British Empire Gas Exhibit Committee of the evils that result from the nuisance of coal.

The exhibit is placed where thousands may see, and we hope they will all mark, learn, and inwardly digest the evils that result to the community by burning soft coal.

Here one may see for oneself illustrations of the destroyed power of smoke. Take our National monuments. We can see its effect on them by the head of a figure recently removed from Westminster Hospital, into which the sulphurous acid of smoke has bitten deeply. The obvious lesson is, if it so treats the hard stone, what will be the result to the human lungs, and especially the lungs of a young infant.

Colonel Sir Arthur Holbrook, K.C.B., writing on this subject, points out:—

There is not only waste of health and wealth, but also waste of fuel and waste of power. From an economic point of view, therefore, coal smoke, when avoidable, is indefensible.

The United Kingdom burns on an average 40½ million tons of coal for domestic purposes. This quantity throws into the air nearly 2½ million tons of sulphurous soot. Thus are the tar, oils, sulphate of ammonia, gas, and other by-products of coal sacrificed, and thus is the whole community inflicted with disease and destruction.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)