

IN MEMORIAM.

DR. ANNA HAMILTON, STANDARD BEARER.

By a wide circle of friends, in both hemispheres, the announcement of the death of Dr. Anna Hamilton, of Bordeaux, will be received with profound sorrow, for her lifelong work in demonstrating the value of trained nursing on Florence Nightingale lines in the Maison de Santé Protestante at Bordeaux, where she held the dual position of Resident Medical Officer and Directrice of the School of Nursing, has received widespread and respectful admiration.

As she announced to the interim Congress of the International Council of Nurses in Paris in 1907, where she appeared with a group of nurses in the neat uniform of the School, "The School of Nurses is attached to a hospital and constitutes its nursing staff. A woman directs the hospital and training school. We hold that the value of training depends on these two points." The words now sound commonplace, but at that time they constituted in France "a gage of battle."

Dr. Hamilton's interest in skilled nursing as a potent factor in the care of the sick dated from the time when she was a medical student in France at the end of the last century. She was so revolted by the practice of medicine as she saw it in the wards, and so shocked by the callousness of many of her fellow-students and the coarseness of hospital procedure, that she almost relinquished the idea of qualifying, but when, as Miss Lavinia Dock tells us in "A History of Nursing," arriving by her own reflections at the conclusion that the care given to the patient might be organised on a moral, intelligent, and sympathetic system, and that medicine might then become truly beneficent, she decided to continue her training and to take the subject of Nursing for her Thesis when going up for her medical degree.

Dr. Hamilton has related how when she took the manuscript of her Thesis to the President "he was dreadful."

Then he proposed to let her have a Thesis prepared by someone else, so as to get her degree as quickly as possible. She refused and said that she would not hear of signing a Thesis written by someone else and that she was determined to keep to this subject. "Then you must do it all over." "If I must I will," she replied.

The Thesis was handed in to the critical Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier in June, 1900. It was gossiped about that it would not be accepted on account of the menial subject. "This," says Dr. Hamilton, "brought a small crowd of about 200 to listen. The time was noon and such proceedings usually took about 15 minutes.

But that day the four judges were shut up in their Council Chamber and everyone got impatient. It was one o'clock when they came out in their scarlet silken robes, looking excited and red in the face. It later got about that they had been discussing my Thesis." But at length it was passed.

Would that we had been present to hear this Thesis presented. It was an epoch-making document that touched every fibre of the national life of the people from the cradle to the grave. In a few short years the teaching of the Thesis had something of the same extraordinary influence in France which the works of Florence Nightingale had in England in the early sixties of the last century.

Till recently Dr. Hamilton devoted herself to the direction of Nurse Training Schools in Bordeaux, and held the position of Hon. Director at the time of her death.

In 1907 it was our happiness to visit her at the Maison de Santé Protestante to study her methods and become acquainted with the staff and pupils, a most inspiring and delightful time.

We found them well-educated girls, of refined breeding, who were encouraged to take an intelligent interest not only in their own work, but in that of others.

Once again, during the Great War, we had the pleasure of visiting Dr. Hamilton and her School, but that is another story.

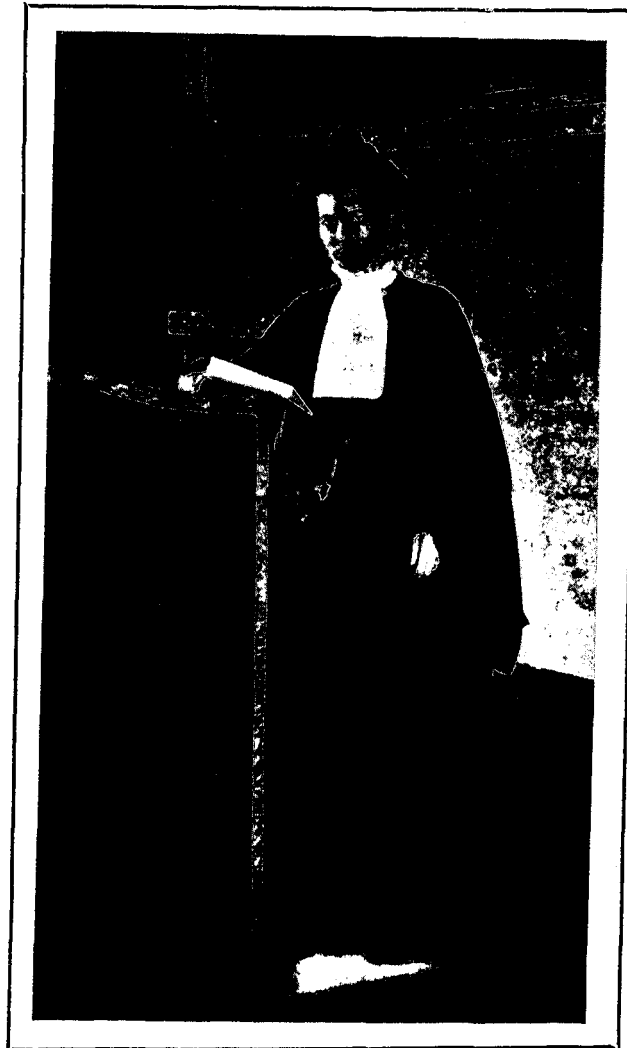
It was joy to her indeed when, by the gift of a beautiful site at Talence, some two miles from Bordeaux, by a good friend of the hospital, her heart's desire was realised by the erection of a hospital in conformity with her ideals for the care of the sick, and later when the American Nurses' Association decided to build as a memorial to their colleagues who "died in service" during the Great War, the Nurses' Residence in connection with the hospital, dedicating it to the "Higher Education of Nurses, for humanity and for France."

In July last, Miss Clara D.

Noyes, Chairman of the Memorial Committee, attended the graduating exercises and presented the diplomas to the graduating class, the first time such a ceremony had been held.

It is good to realise that Dr. Hamilton lived to know of this fulfilment of her work though no longer able to participate in the work of the School and hospital, and that it is being carried on by Mlle. Cornet-Auquier, a graduate of the School, the present Directrice.

From its inception Dr. Hamilton took a deep interest in the development and work of the International Council of Nurses and attended many of its Congresses.



DR. ANNA HAMILTON
Presenting her Thesis on Nursing before the
Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier, 1900.

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