

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

As it is hoped that the Annual Meeting will be held in July, a Meeting of the Council will be held on Friday, June 28th, at 2.30 p.m., to consider the Annual Report and new Nominations for the Council.

"THE NAVY IS HERE."

We feel sure that members of the British College of Nurses will read the following letter from Captain Philip L. Vian, R.N., with very sincere pleasure. It will be preserved in the archives of the History Section.

H.M.S. "Cossack,"
c/o P.O., London.

May 24th, 1940.

Dear President,

Thank you very much indeed for your telegram.

It was very kind of you to think of sending it and I appreciate it very greatly.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Vian.

The rescue of 300 British prisoners from the German armed auxiliary *Altmark* in Joessing Fjord, Norway, last February, by H.M.S. *Cossack*, of which Captain Vian was commander, was an episode in Naval history never to be forgotten, and when it became known that the destroyer *Afridi*, of which Captain Vian, D.S.O., was in command, had been sunk by enemy bombs in the North Sea whilst conveying Allied troops, the deepest anxiety was felt until it was announced that Captain Vian was one of those saved from death.

As reported by the B.B.C. fifteen nurses stood huddled together on a Flanders beach. They were wet through, mud-stained.

Then the Navy picked them up. Soon they were sleeping in warm blankets.

Next morning, when they arrived at a British port, their uniforms were handed to them—washed, pressed, and ironed.

Just part of the Navy's rescue service.

THE CANADIAN-POLISH AMBULANCE UNIT.

"THE STAR WHOSE LIGHT WE FOLLOW."

In our last issue we reported the interest taken by members of the British College of Nurses and their friends in the organisation of the Canadian-Polish Ambulance Unit, which, fully equipped, left London for France on May 1st, there to await in Paris directions for active service, the provision of skilled nursing for the Polish soldiers on the Western Front. From letters received, it would appear that service came along at once, when, on a beautiful summer's day, the personnel crossed in a troopship and found that after long marches blistered feet needed skilled attention, which was joyfully given and received. Why not have this attention available on every troopship? We know Napoleon's soldiers "Marched on their stomachs"; permit our men also to claim some consideration for their feet.

Havre, Rouen, the latter vastly interesting, and then Paris, stopping on the way at a charming spot for luncheon on the Seine.

On arrival in Paris, the Unit was met by Miss Elizabeth Whitmore, the liaison officer, and representative of the Unit in Paris, who has done invaluable work looking after the comfort of the Unit already in Paris, and in maintaining contact day by day with the Polish Red Cross; indeed, without her it would have been very difficult to make the necessary arrangements in time for the reception of the British contingent.

On the following day members of the Unit were invited to the Polish Embassy, a palatial place, to luncheon, and there met Professor Jurasz, of the Polish Red Cross, the

very distinguished Polish surgeon, who escaped from Cracow in time to evade the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp, and who is their immediate medical chief. Here also the Polish Ambassadors, the daughter of the Prime Minister, and other guests who were present, expressed their gratitude for what the British are doing to help the cause of Poland. The following day the ambulances were inspected at the Polish Red Cross centre by Polish officers, who expressed "delight" with them.

The next interesting visit was paid to the Polish Nurses, attached to the Unit, who are all billeted in the same house, who entertained their English colleagues to a wonderful tea of Polish cakes and tarts made by themselves, the tables being decorated with the Polish colours. These nurses were wearing their nice air-force blue uniform for the first time. Thus a delightful friendship was established, which no doubt will last through war—into the future glorious days of peace—when the Polish people will again be free.

In return for this kind reception, the British members sent a large box of lovely sweets, with which "Poland" was delighted: "Coming events cast their shadows before!" Sister Oakley Williams is in the news—her uniform, made in Paris, is very much admired, and as she has her four ribbons and the rank of Captain, we are informed she looks very imposing, and no doubt will, by devoting herself to duty in season and out of season, prove worthy of any "bimbones" which may come along! Next a visit was paid to Mlle. Joannis, President of the National Association of Trained Nurses of France, and Mrs. Fenwick's letter of introduction presented—the Unit was, of course, most kindly received, and the good work explained to them in every detail.

Since the refugees have been pouring into Paris from Belgium, footsore and semi-starved, members of the Unit have been pressed into their service, working night and day, and taking stretcher cases to hospital, etc. Useless to try to describe their distress, thousands and thousands of them starving and destitute, just a bundle of goods snatched at the last moment from their bombed homes, all the worldly goods they possess, old women and babies, all manner of human wrecks; help given to a blind woman who had walked 86 miles. Such feet, cut and one mass of blisters! And yet some have rescued their birds and put them into cardboard boxes, their cats and dogs were brought along, too heart-breaking for words.

"I am glad," writes Sister Oakley Williams, "we are of some use to the French, who are simply delighted with our help; they are so good to the refugees—any day now we may get our military papers through, and must obey orders. . . . Yesterday we had an 'Alert' . . . it would have been a cruel thing if a bomb had dropped amongst these refugees after all their sufferings to escape. . . . 'B.J.N.' just arrived, most interesting, shall read every word of it!"

We learn that the Unit has received directions to proceed to the district in Brittany where its services have been requisitioned, and where we feel sure it will render devoted service to our Polish Allies who are proving themselves as great in adversity as they were in times of liberty and peace.

MISS PATT TUCKETT CONVALESCING.

We have received several enquiries about the health of Miss Patt Tuckett, the Commandant of the Unit, who, greatly disappointed, could not go with it to France.

Miss Tuckett was admitted to a private ward at the London Hospital, so that her friends realised that the best of medical and nursing care would be available, and, indeed, Miss Reynolds, the Matron, with her usual kindness wrote that "they feel honoured to look after her." Miss Tuckett, after treatment, is now out of hospital and recommended care and fresh air.

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