

## PUBLIC ENERGY NO. 1.

No one yet has solved the mystery of Energy. What inspires it, how it is stored, and whither it evaporates. One thing, however, is certain, that the British people during the past 20 years have ceased to store it in excess, and those who do are treated as abnormal. Of such is Mrs. Roosevelt, the wife of the President of U.S.A., as we learned when she paid us a visit last year.

In this connection the following article, which we reprint from a recent issue of the *Journal of the Western Australian Nurses*, is intriguing:—

### AMERICA'S HOSPITAL VISITOR NO. 1.

Tier after tier of sun balconies rose from the courtyard they surrounded until they seemed to meet the sky, and looking upwards from the ground appeared as a colourful amphitheatre, the rails lined with the figures of sick and wounded American servicemen wearing Burgundy velvet dressing-gowns glowing warm against the pastel shades of the walls and ceilings. In the courtyard below the nursing staff in white uniforms with blue capes. On the dais in the centre, generals and an admiral grouped around a tall woman in the azure uniform of the U.S. Red Cross—Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of the President, but at this moment just a friend from home to those figures on the balconies, bringing a message from other wives and mothers to far-away menfolk, telling of love and pride in their achievements.

This was a scene in just one big general hospital which Mrs. Roosevelt has visited. The moment itself is repeated in different surroundings from base hospitals to shining chromium and pastel palaces of hygiene any number of times.

Always the thread of Mrs. Roosevelt's message is the same, but she has the knack of conveying it differently, so that it never becomes hackneyed either to herself or to her audience. To the sick and wounded she says in effect: "Get well soon, we want you home as much as you want to come." To the hale and hearty: "May peace come soon so that you may come home." To the nurses: "I wish you the best of luck, and so does the President. I know you must feel rewarded for what you do by the knowledge that you can look after the boys and make them comfortable until they are well enough to be sent home or to resume their duties."

To all Americans: "The President thinks you are doing a wonderful job. He is watching where every one of our ships is at sea and where every one of our units is fighting. He marks the places on the map every day."

Mrs. Roosevelt has been called Public Energy No. 1 in the U.S.A. It is true that in Australia she has left in her wake relays of exhausted press, radio, and newsreel reporters. They have never met anyone who could compare with her for energy and endurance. Much is being said and written about her whirlwind tour. Interstate hops are done by bomber. She has often several appointments to the hour, but she never appears to be in a hurry, and in military hospitals, which it is her first care to visit, her progress seems leisurely. That is deceptive, of course, as anyone who tries to keep up with her discovers, but she has the grand faculty of appearing unhurried. There is always a minute or two to talk to patients.

An obviously distraught lad thrust a letter into her hands at one hospital. Deliberately Mrs. Roosevelt took out her glasses and read it through. She murmured a few words in comforting tones, and the boy, his face working, said: "It's so difficult to talk with all these people around." So attendant officers, press, and cameramen were asked to leave, as well as nurses and doctors, and the President's wife became just an American mother trying to help someone else's son.

A coloured soldier was curled up looking rather wistful and homesick as Mrs. Roosevelt moved quietly along between the beds. She placed her long, gentle fingers on his arm and said: "Broken ankles *are* bad, aren't they?" "They sure is, Ma'am," he said, but his eyes lit up for a minute and his white teeth flashed in a smile to answer hers.

On again through the X-ray department, more wards, a word with a man on a trolley waiting to go to the operating theatre, a cheerful few minutes in the occupational therapy room, where a soldier had just completed a remarkably good portrait of the President in black and white, and where some scenes from jungle warfare were vividly portrayed in chalk sketches, and then to the cinema theatre. A quick "that is good" as Mrs. Roosevelt heard there were two shows a day there.

The visit was over. Smiling and calling "Goodbye, boys!" Mrs. Roosevelt left for the next hospital.

## A PIONEER MATRON.

On the 20th December, 1943, a pleasant little ceremony took place in the board room of Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Dublin, when Miss Reeves, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., Matron of the Hospital, was presented with her portrait by her colleagues on the Visiting Staff, as a token of their appreciation of her work.

In making the presentation, Mr. W. S. Haughton, the Senior Member of the Visiting Staff, referred to the many years they had been working together, and acknowledged to having learnt many things from her during that time. He spoke of her work in the training of her Nurses, and the consequent high percentage of those doing well in their examinations.

Dr. Kirkpatrick concurred with Mr. Haughton's remarks, and said that since the Hospital appointed their own Matron and trained their own Nurses they had never had anyone half so good as Miss Reeves, and it gave the Staff very great pleasure to work with her. She had been with them now for 25 years, and they hoped she would be here for a great many more.

Dr. Bourke and Mr. Chance also spoke—the latter adding that he thought the Hospital would lose half its merit and half its worth if they had not got the Matron they had at present.

In accepting the picture and thanking the donors, Miss Reeves said she had done her best and had been greatly helped by the kindness she had always received from the Members of the Staff. She said she had a reputation for being hard to please, which she thought was undeserved, but she acknowledged to a stern insistence on attention to detail on the part of her Nurses, which she considered most important.

Miss Reeves then referred to the long period she had spent in her Profession, in the Adelaide Hospital, the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital, and finally in Steevens' Hospital, and paid a generous tribute to the loyal co-operation and assistance she had received from the Sisters and Members of the Nursing Staff, for which she sincerely thanked them. She then expressed a desire that the picture should be given into the care of the Governors, to hang in the Hospital in which she had worked for so many years.

Our association with Miss Reeves dates back to the "good old days" when England and Ireland were one so far as the nursing world was concerned, and we offer her our warm admiration for her many years' devotion to duty in her responsible position.

As a Fellow of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., Miss Reeves keeps in touch with us through the I.C.N.

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