

# Increasing Unpopularity of the Fashionable "War Nurses"



"Rumor Reaches Us That Too Many Eyes, Whose Enthusiastic Patriotism Exceeds Their Efficiency Have Volunteered for Attendance on the Sick. The Above Picture Shows a Wounded Hero Having His Hair Brushed for the Ninth Time." Sketch from the London Tatler.

## Hysteria, Intrigue and Cigarette-Smoking Idlers Make the Noted Dr. Blake Resign from the Paris American Ambulance and Now There Are Threats to Stop His Supply of Wounded!

Paris, Oct. 2.  
**T**HE plague of frivolous war nurses—already denounced by the Countess of Warwick and others, has produced a most ridiculous though deplorable situation.

Dr. Joseph A. Blake, the famous American surgeon, has resigned from the American Ambulance, the most richly supported war hospital in Paris, because he could not stand the constant intrusion of incompetent society nurses and helpers. He wishes to join the British Base Hospital at Les Oranges, which is conducted in a scientific manner and from which frivolous idlers have been sternly excluded.

Of course Dr. Blake did not say that he was resigning on account of the society nurses. That would have been unprofessional, but it is reasonably certain that that is the true reason, from the manner in which his resignation has been received by the leading women of the American colony in Paris and from other facts.

At first they declared that Dr. Blake must on no account be allowed to resign. Then they said that if he went to the British hospital they would use their influence to see that it received no wounded.

The American colony in Paris is to a large extent composed of wealthy persons of leisure. The art students and poor Americans struggled back after the outbreak of war, while those who remained were generally persons of independent means who had become permanent residents of France. They were feverishly anxious to show their loyalty to the country of their adoption when the great calamity fell upon it.

The American War Ambulance Hospital was immediately organized. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were subscribed. Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, the elder, who has spent a large part of her time in Paris for many years, was one of the most liberal subscribers. Only recently a fresh subscription of \$350,000 was received.

The American colony were delighted to find a most distinguished New York surgeon, handsome and quite fascinating, to whom they could chat in their own language, ready to work in their hospital.

Dr. Blake, who was long regarded as one of the leading surgeons of New York, had left that city because of his domestic troubles and his wife's divorce suit. He settled in Paris and married there the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Clarence Mackay, who, by the way, has employed all her tact to smooth out difficulties at the hospital, but in vain.

Dr. Blake at first welcomed the opportunity to bury himself in the most serious and absorbing kind of work and avoid the social curiosity which had often annoyed him. He became an assistant to a French physician, Dr. Dubouché, as the managers of the hospital wished to show their complete subordination to France's interests.

Dr. Blake had no sooner put on



Dr. Joseph A. Blake, the Famous New York Surgeon with Some of His Paris Patients, His Care for Whom Has Been Made Difficult by Society Busybodies.

his operating suit and taken out his instruments than he became aware of an astonishing state of affairs. There was an insufficiency of patients and an embarrassing excess of society nurses, animated fashion plates and untrained helpers of all kinds.

The fact was that the French army did not want military hospitals in Paris, but the society element, both American and French, insisted on having some wounded darlings to cherish. The consequence was that the few wounded who fell into their hands were smothered with affection and unskilled attention, a very bad thing for those who were in a serious condition.

Dr. Karl Connell, a New York surgeon, who was for a time associated with Dr. Blake in the American Ambulance, has described the state of affairs.

"The basic difficulty," said Dr. Connell, "is that Paris is in charge of the French military authorities and is an armed camp. As such the military authorities did all they could at first to keep it free from wounded. It was only in response to the hysterical demands of the civilian population for wounded that the civil government of France overrode the protestations of the military during the scenes of disorganization which followed the battle of the Marne and permitted the wounded to be brought to Paris. Less than 4,000 wounded were apportioned to the 60,000 beds in the French capital. These patients were fought for by the various organizations, and in the melee the American colony got more than its share.

"The wounded were housed in luxurious style, and their treatment was beyond any conception of demands which might be made in time of war. They were cared for and fed as no hospital in New York provides for the sick. In fact, on these wounded there was lavished the entire love, sympathy and hysteria of the American colony."

"To provide for all the volunteers the necessary labor was apportioned out to the corps of helpers, and these were ten times in excess of similar staffs of established institutions. The wounded in the surgical division were handled with the utmost efficiency. This served the purposes of establishing cordial political relationships and in providing a vent for the hysteria of the civilian colony."

"Wounded continued to be scarce, but the American Ambulance, by its active and aggressive political attitude and its muscular ambulance corps, continued to gather more than its share. There were some fine young American college athletes among the young physicians, and some of the other volunteer agencies used to ask them to help them get some wounded."

Dr. Connell admitted that there was some cigarette smoking and jollification about the hospital, although he was inclined to mini-



The Patient: Lummy, 'er Ladyship Again? Look 'ere, George! Be a Sport. Go and Tell 'er I'm Too Bloomin' Ill to Be Nussed To-day.

A Cartoon from London Sketch, One of Many Satires upon Fashionable "War Nurses."

The Beautiful Mrs. Joseph A. Blake, Formerly Mrs. Clarence Mackay, Who Employed All Her Tact in Vain to Settle Her Husband's Difficulties at the Paris Hospital.

imize its effect in demoralizing the organization.

"It was not unusual for the volunteer nurses to smoke in the corridors," said Dr. Connell. "It is the social custom of the country. As the volunteers and helpers were all of high social standing, they usually met at tea for a few minutes at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, surgeons, nurses, ambulance drivers, orderlies. Why not? The ambulance driver or the orderly might be a count or a member of some aristocratic family."

It will be recalled that Miss Nona McAdoo, the pretty twenty-year-old daughter of Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo, went to work in this hospital and returned to America very suddenly. It was unkindly reported that she had come away in disgust because she went to nurse wounded soldiers and found she had to scrub floors. The truth is that she found that to do the work of a nurse faithfully was too severe a tax on her physique, and she very sensibly resigned.

Conditions in the various war hospitals had already been denounced by the Countess of Warwick in scathing words, which have been echoed in all the allied countries. Doctors and other authorities were at first more or less intimidated by the high social position of the butterfly nurses, and this straightforward language from a woman of the Countess of Warwick's rank and celebrity nerved them up to do their duty.

"Unfortunately there is a very large company of young women to whom war is little more than a new sensation," said Lady Warwick. "The people I have in mind have not been content to devote themselves to brainless frivolity, because they must sample every sensation that the seasons provide—they have invaded the sanctuary of the hospital nurse. Scores have found their way to the great London hospitals in town to face what they are pleased to regard as training. I have known some who have

danced till 3 a. m. and have presented themselves at the hospital at 8 o'clock!

"Everybody knows that the training of a real hospital nurse is a very serious matter; that it makes full demand upon physical and mental capacity, and that a long period is required to bring the seed of efficiency to flower or fruit. The social butterflies have made no such sacrifice. They have acquired a trifling and superficial knowledge of a nurse's work and have then set their social influence to work in order to reach some one of the base hospitals where they may sample fresh experience.

"They subvert discipline; they are a law to themselves; they are too highly placed or protected to be called to order promptly; they have neither the inclination nor the capacity for sustained usefulness. To sit at the end of a bed and smoke cigarettes with a wounded officer does not develop the efficiency of a hospital."

These words of Lady Warwick led to a rigid reform of the British war hospitals, and especially those in France. Absolute control of the nursing staff is now given to professional nurses of long standing. No volunteers or amateurs are allowed to handle patients. All probationers must go through a period of training similar to that required in time of peace. They must begin their service by doing the hardest and most menial kind of work instead of "sitting on a bed smoking a cigarette and holding the hand of a handsome young officer."

The rigid enforcement of these rules has led to a wholesale abandonment of the "nursing career" by the butterflies of English society. It was this reform that led Dr. Blake to plan to transfer his services to the big new British base hospital at Les Oranges. This is said to be a model of its kind. It is interesting to note that its chief business manager is an American woman, Lady Johnstone, wife of Sir Alan Johnstone, of the British diplomatic service, and sister of Clifford Pinchot, of New York.

A curious feature in making Dr. Blake's position in the American hospital unpleasant was said to be the jealousy of the French doctors. They enjoy a handsome income from treating rich Americans in Paris, and it was insinuated that they feared a surgeon of Dr. Blake's reputation, with his fame enhanced by the war, would in future take much of this away from them. This imputation is naturally indignantly denied by the Frenchmen.

One thing that stands out of this fuss is the cruel wrong that is done to wounded soldiers, who are used as playthings by the society butterflies. When a man has offered his life for his country and perhaps suffered horrible injuries he surely should receive the most serious and skilful attention that can possibly be given.

The scandalous conditions that have prevailed in many places are reflected in a cartoon in an English newspaper, where a poor wounded British Tommy, all smothered in bandages, says to a soldier attendant:

"Be a sport. Tell her ladyship I'm too sick to be nussed to-day."



Mrs. Blake (Then Mrs. Clarence Mackay) in a Tableau as a War Nurse—a Prophetic Scene.

### Why Our Stomachs Don't Digest Themselves

**W**HY should not our stomachs, which produce gastric juices capable of digesting flesh that offers a decided resistance to the action of these juices, digest their own mucous membrane, which is about the most delicate and tender substance in the human body?

For a long time it was believed that the gastric juices would not attack a living tissue. When, however, the ear of a living rabbit was allowed to hang into the stomach of a dog through an orifice into which a glass tube was fitted, so that the experimenter could see all that was passing within, it was found that the rabbit's ear was actually attacked within a short time by the gastric juices. This exploded the notion that living tissues could not be digested by the stomach.

Why then does the stomach not digest itself? Because the living body possesses a miraculous power producing protective agents whenever necessary. The protective substance it generates to check the action of the stomach upon it-

self is called trypsin. The moment the organism dies trypsin is no longer generated, and the gastric juices remaining in the stomach and intestines actually do begin to digest themselves.

Paradoxes of this sort abound in our bodies. Old age, for example, can be produced artificially in an animal by injecting into its blood adrenalin, an albuminous substance obtained from the adrenal glands. And yet our own bodies not only contain adrenalin, but we cannot live without it. Without it fatigue is caused by the slightest muscular exertion.

It is plain that in the case of adrenalin the body generates some protective substance to protect itself against premature old age, just as it produces trypsin as a check against the digestive activity of the stomach. In old age, the body's efficiency in manufacturing these various protective agents is materially lowered, and the baneful effect of adrenalin, finding a less and less powerful brake confronting it, poisons all the organs of the body and thus produces the symptoms which we describe as old age.