

The Nursing Record "At Homes."

No. 5.

MISS KATE MARSDEN AT OUR OFFICES.

OUR chief was steadily wading through a little mountain of letters and articles, sent in by would-be-contributors to the NURSING RECORD, and I was somewhat sarcastically observing that, at the present rate of acceptance, he would soon have no space left for the effusions of his own staff, when a card was brought into his sanctum, and he handed it to me with the brief comment—

"There, if you will interview Miss KATE MARSDEN, we'll soon find room for that."

In another minute, I had introduced myself to our Nursing Heroine. The tall, erect, strongly-built physique which seemed made for active and laborious work, the clear cut features, the square and resolute looking chin, all combined to give one, at once, the feeling that this was no ordinary woman, that here was a living example of the steel hand in the velvet glove, of the most inflexible determination of will, and of heroic powers of patient endurance, only partially concealed by a most feminine voice and refinement, and most courteous and unusually self-contained manners.

"The Editor is engaged for a few minutes, Miss MARSDEN. Will you excuse him, and meanwhile allow me to interview you for the NURSING RECORD? We are all so proud to know that you have become a colleague. You are going to let us hear, from time to time, how your good work goes on, are you not?"

"Yes, I shall have much pleasure in reporting progress whenever I can," said Miss MARSDEN. "You see, I want my own countrymen to take an interest in the work of helping the lepers, and it is wonderful how little, people in England realise what an awful disease leprosy is."

"I know you do not like talking about yourself, Miss MARSDEN, so I will not ask you for any details of your travels; besides, I am hoping to read all about them soon in your book. By the bye, everyone is asking when it is going to be published."

"I am hoping that it will be out in about three weeks. It is delayed because it must appear simultaneously both in England and the United States, in order that I may secure the American copyright; and

do you know I had spent all my money in finding the lepers, and so I have had to get friends to help me in providing the necessary funds for publishing the book. Once it is out, I hope my money difficulties will be over."

"Yes, Miss MARSDEN, I have heard how good you have been, in not only risking your life, but in giving away everything, you had to pay the great expenses of your journey."

"Oh, please don't talk like that, or I shall not like to tell you any more. But I should like you to understand, that upon the advice of very kind and clever friends, a Committee is being formed which will take care of me in a pecuniary sense, as well as look after the lepers if anything happens to me. You see my book is my own, and I am going to lecture all through the United States about the work, because the Americans are so generous, and I am told I should get the money for the Colonies much sooner there, than anywhere else. Well, whatever I get from my book and my lectures, will be sent home to my Committee, who will allow me from it what I need for my expenses, and the rest will go to the KATE MARSDEN LEPER FUND, which will be chiefly made up of donations and subscriptions, and all of which will be invested, and only the interest used as a sort of endowment of the Colonies."

"Yes, I quite understand. But where will these Colonies be, Miss MARSDEN?"

"Oh, here are the plans. The first Colony is to be in the Yakoutsk Government, or Province, of Siberia; the Government has authorised it, and they are now hard at work clearing the ground for building. There are, you see, to be ten houses, each with room for ten lepers, a Hospital, a Church, and houses for the doctors, the priests and the sisters. Then when I have collected the money, I am going to Siberia *via* Kamchatka, where it is said there are a number of other lepers quite as helpless and friendless as those I found in Siberia. If I find them, I want at once to build a Colony for them also. Then my Committee here will supply me with funds for the maintenance of both these Colonies, and I shall feel that my work is done."

"Oh no, Miss MARSDEN; you will come safely back to England I hope, and do something for the poor lepers in British possessions. Dear me, there is the Editor's bell; thank you so much for your most interesting information, which I am sure the readers of the RECORD will be glad to hear."

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