

The Nursing Record "At Homes."

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MADAME REIJNVAAN AT THE CITY HOSPITAL,
AMSTERDAM.

WE are indebted to a distinguished Amsterdam correspondent for the following account.

From her youth Madame Reijnvaan had an ardent longing to nurse sick people. Being a member of a large family, she often found occasion to be useful in that way. She obtained her first practical knowledge of bandages, dressings, and so on, in 1870, during the Franco-German war, when she helped to prepare the chests of bandages for the ambulances sent out from our country to the seat of war, but could not get the permission from her father to join the band of Sisters sent out from Holland to nurse the wounded. Her interest in nursing still increased, but it was not until the year 1881 that her family circumstances enabled her to get some professional knowledge of nursing in one of our great city Hospitals, where she passed her examination with great credit and received the testimonial of the White Cross.

She next worked for some time in a private Hospital at Amsterdam, in order to gain more practical knowledge of surgical operations.

It was at that time that she made the acquaintance of the Medical Superintendent of the Suburban Hospital at Amsterdam, Dr. van Deventer, the Director of the Buiten-Gasthuis. He kindly undertook to instruct her and three of her lady friends in some branches of nursing in which they found themselves deficient. The happy Wednesday evenings passed in the ancient low-ceiled room, when they got an insight into many points of nursing totally unknown to them, partially demonstrated in the wards of the old Hospital, decided for ever the future path in life of those four companions.

During the winter of 1882-83, a total re-organisation of the city Hospitals at Amsterdam took place, and it was at the instigation of Dr. van

Deventer that the Town Council resolved to appoint Lady Superintendents at the head of the nursing staff and the household.

In the Buiten-Gasthuis, Madame Reijnvaan was appointed and accepted the nomination the more readily, being sure of the help and support of Dr. Van Deventer and his wife, both of whom lived in the Hospital.

That invaluable help never failed her during the nine years and a half during which they worked together at the re-organisation of the old Hospital, and at the preparations for the Wilhemina Hospital.

Those years were a most eventful period in the history and the development of the Nursing sisterhood, not only in our Hospital, but in our whole country. In the year 1883, the Nursing staff of the Hospitals consisted of a body of maid and men servants, willing to nurse, but too uneducated to fulfil properly, what in the present time, is rightly expected from a Nurse. It has been no easy labour to organise in such an old building, possessing no convenient accommodation for the Nurses and Sisters, a staff of properly educated gentlewomen willing to nurse the poor sufferers confided to their care.

The special department destined for the insane (the most acute suffering in Amsterdam) was naturally the most difficult of all, and especially was this so with the re-organisation of the men's wards. Still, even on that point, there has been achieved a great success, and Madame Reijnvaan is justly

proud that her sisters may be reckoned a good and trustworthy band, whose services, on leaving our Hospital, are most eagerly sought for.

Yet in Holland, Nursing affairs are only at the beginning, but we try to follow the example given, especially in England, and it is our very earnest wish to be enlightened by your experience in our efforts to promote the welfare, both of our patients and our Nurses.

Though 48 years old, Madame Reijnvaan is strong and energetic enough to fight the battle in the good cause, and Dutch Nurses looked to her to do for them what some admirable ladies have brought to pass for Nurses in England.



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