The Red Cross of Buda.

By Lina Mollett.

FOR centuries Buda groaned under the rule of the crescent. For centuries the beautiful old city looked down from rocky heights on to the broad Danube and the swamps beyond. It saw upstart Pesth rise from those swamps,* and spread fungus-like in all directions; proud of its fine buildings, proud of its grand Institutions, proud of its rapid growth, its fashion and intellect—and *justly* proud! But Buda will ever be first where the dignity of antiquity has weight. Each stone in the old houses is a relic of wild times, of the cruelty of despair and oppression, of the courage of patriotic martyrdom, of rage and death in its most terrible, of heroism in its most noble, forms.

Heroism is not dead in Buda to-day. Far from it! It is there, safe enough, in the accepted style of much maligned modernity, viz., wedded to common sense, and bent on preservation instead of destruction.

We are so familiar with scientific courage among the men and women of to-day, that a splendid Hospital more or less scarcely rouses the attention of those not immediately concerned, but to find every modern improvement in a spot where twenty-five years ago there was, well, rather worse than nothing—a house of healing on a hill that "ran blood"—must enlist, at least, our sympathy.

The Hospital of the Red Cross is situated on one of the blowy heights of Buda. It is surrounded by acres of pleasure grounds with gravelled paths, has a splendid view from every window, and is swept by fresh breezes from a range of hills beyond.

It is famous for the success of its surgical cases, and with all due respect to the undoubted skill of its staff and visiting physicians, some part of this is doubtlessly due to the co-operation of pure air and unlimited space. I never passed through sweeter, fresher wards than those of the Red Cross of Buda.

The Hospital consists of a number of handsome buildings (including a receiving-house), and of spacious barracks, capable of accommodating 600 patients. It is literally a Hospital settlement.

Each of the principal buildings allows for a limited number of patients only. There is no accommodation for infectious cases.

The rooms throughout are lofty, scrupulously clean, severely simple, and in every way adapted to their purpose. The beds are of iron. The flooring is either tiled or composed of polished boarding. The walls are distempered. The baths are of polished copper. Staircases, passages, and linen are spotlessly white; indeed, it would be difficult to discover spot or blemish in any scrubbable or washable nook of this justly self-respecting establishment.

There are three classes of patients received in the Red Cross Hospital. The first has the privilege of a private room, which, if the patient chose, he may share with a home-friend. All luxuries that do not interfere with the main object of his sojourn are permissible to the first-class patient. But beyond the fact that his comfortable rooms have a more furnished appearance, the real advantages of the place—surgical and sanitary—are shared by all classes alike, and food is as carefully prepared for the third-class, or ward-patient, as for his richer brother. The food is cooked by steam. Large copper cauldrons, brilliantly polished, give quite a Dutch aspect to the kitchen.

The dinner services are arranged on the well-known principle of those French and German restaurants that send out dinners to the cookless, *i.e.*, one dish fitting into the other, forming a kind of dinner compactum, mutually warming, and easy of transport.

We noticed a vast array of empty mineral water bottles in the receiving-room for empty crockery. (Hungary is famous for its mineral springs, and some are close at hand.) The dirty crockery was being wheeled in on little trucks, by male attendants, just as we entered. It was passed on to a large scullery, where washing-up, with lavish expenditure of water, was in full swing.

The laundry, with its troop of busy maids and matrons, the ironing-room, the linen-press, would delight any domesticated eye, so perfect is the harmony between the animate and inanimate machinery of work. I noticed a kind of wooden network flooring, that would allow water to drain off below, and save the workers from wet feet. In the ironing-room matters were going on briskly. The whole place was sweet and clean, cheery, and busy. The irons used were of bright polished steel, filled with glowing charcoal.

"We add to our income by taking in the washing of the Pedagogic Training College, close at hand," observed the Sister who kindly showed us round.

"Do you find it pay you to burden yourselves with so much extra work?"

She smiled, and named the pretty considerable sum that soap and water and scrubbing did add to that Hospital's revenues.

*A form of malarial fever is still so common here, that it is called "Hungarian fever."

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previous page next page