"Everything helps," she concluded good humouredly.

The linen-store was, of course, a linen-treasury. One expects that in Hungary. The average Hungarian far out-strips the average Englishwoman in "wealth of nappery" and "broidered linen," and the Hungarian Hospital naturally follows lead. Lovingly the Sister patted the immaculate cloths and snowy sheets and towels, while she revealed the wealth of whiteness almost apologetically.

"Some of it is coarse, you know, for ordinary purposes."

It was good all round, and one could honestly say so.

"These stockings are for the third-class patients. We provide everything for them. They are darned, you see."

They were. As I looked at them I felt small. The darns were feats of needle-craft. They would have done honour to a piece of Guipure lace, and here they were on the white cotton socks of third-class Hospital patients.

"So third-class patients do not provide their own linen?"

"No, we find it better not."

There was the basin of a large fountain on the wide square that lay between the buildings.

"It plays on Sunday," said the Sister. It makes a change."

There was nothing cramped about any of the arrangements. By the time we returned to the Matron's drawing room, we had had quite a respectable walk.

"Well," said the Matron cheerily, "what do you think of our Hospital?"

It was a pleasure to give voice to one's impressions.

"Yes," observed our hostess with gentle pride, "our Hospital is justly famous. We have had visitors from many countries—from Italy, from Russia, from Austria, from Bosnia, and," she smiled kindly, "from England. We have patients, too, from far. And we have had many successful cures."

I had heard before that this was undoubtedly the case.

"You see," she continued, "the youth of our Hospital has one great advantage. We have most modern improvements, and, among them, we have tried hard to have the best."

She might have added that a conscientious appreciation of the importance of "trifles" had done quite as much towards making the work a success. Perhaps the general acceptance among Nurses (worth the name) of the fact that in sick-nursing (as in Nature) there is nothing trivial, is one of the grandest results of present disciplined training—a training not confined to the 19th century, but certainly invested by our generation with a universal dignity that it is for us to uphold.

"The busiest time for the Hospital is usually spring. Patients who come in for operations often cannot, or do not, wish to risk travelling in winter, while, for obvious reasons, the summer months are not popular." *

The wholesome tyranny of soap and water had not by any means banished the artistic element from the Red Cross. It did not, however, find vent in over-decoration. Such as it was, it was of the best, and never out of place.

The wall of the main staircase on either hand represents a wild and rock-strewn plain. Jagged clouds are sweeping across a storm-tossed sky, and the colouring of the whole landscape suggests gloom and exhaustion after tumult. It is a masterly setting for the sad, wearied people the artist has placed among such scenes.

On one side, naked, sick, starved, a group of wretched Hungarian peasants. Their misery, which, in cases, has reached the point of apathy, would be revolting in its realism, were it not for one redeeming figure, on whom all eyes are fixed—a Nurse, St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

She stands erect among her dependants, with the expression of quiet sympathy of one who is going about an habitual round of daily duties. Such an expression as one would see any day on the face of a well-bred Hospital Probationer. There is absolutely nothing melo-dramatic about St. Elizabeth. She is evidently doing *her* work, which happens to be admirable in the eyes of the world.

Festy, the well-known artist, had learnt by experience to value this quality of gentle self-possession.

"Festy was a patient here," the Matron explained; "on his recovery he painted these frescoes."

A more graceful compliment to his Nurses could scarcely be imagined, and the circumstances give a vividness to the underlying thought that is full of interest.

The second fresco represents a field after the battle. All the enthusiasm and fire have burnt to ashes. The rush of battle, the joy of destruction

* The Hungarian winter is severe. The Danube usually carries a solid coating of ice, three, four, even five feet thick, while the summer, as a rule, is hot and dry in this district.

The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.

previous page next page