

Perhaps my readers will be more interested in Nursing details and internal arrangements of the Hospital. It consisted of three separate blocks, connected by short corridors. The first, with the entrance in the middle of the building, contained the doctor's and secretary's offices, a very fine operating room, with four windows and skylight, "consulta" for out-patients, and Spanish patients' bath-room, from which, after their very necessary ablutions, they were conducted to the wards or operating-room, as the case demanded. On the other side of the same block were the Matron's and my rooms—all well-furnished with English furniture—and our bath-room. The second block contained three large well-ventilated Spanish wards and the bed-rooms, dining-room, and bath-room for English patients. Does it strike my readers as an odd arrangement that my rooms were quite apart from the wards. There were several reasons why this should be so, but electric bells communicated to my rooms from all the English patients' rooms as well as for the Spanish Nurses, who were supposed (!!!) to be always in their own wards. It may, perhaps, throw some reflection on the Spanish Nurses by that element of doubt, but it will be the work of ages before Spanish women will rank as good Nurses (I speak only of the working classes, not of the religious sisterhoods). They are kind and sympathetic, and, in many cases, very hard-working, but quiet, order, and discipline are opposed to their temperament as a nation, and certainly to very indifferently-educated women the method of training with our English sense of the fitness of things is, to say the least of it, very irksome. They never think—it is too great an effort; to them it is much easier to work mechanically, and let others do the thinking. This is particularly irritating to an English energetic nature, and I think there are many ludicrous scenes which occurred soon after my arrival still fresh in the memory of those Spanish Nurses when language failed me to express my indignation at something left undone, or done, from want of thought. They are not always ungrateful for kindness, and return it in a manner peculiar to themselves. The men were very good patients, bearing long confinements in bed generally more patiently than our own cases at home. Perhaps this is a negative virtue, for they are naturally indolent, and not only was their daily bread and very substantial meals of "puchero" assured, but half-pay given to their wives so long as they remained in Hospital. The Spanish cases were nearly all surgical. I can recall some of them now only with a shudder. A surgical Nurse had a wide and ample field of work, but malarial fever patients were always welcomed by me; none repaid so well the generous diet of the Hospital nor the careful medical treatment of the doctor, who gave much time and attention to these cases, enabling him to procure several specimens of the malarial parasite, which could be seen moving through a powerful microscope—a source of great interest and pleasure to me—through his kindness.

English friends and the exchange of visits made a very pleasant change to Hospital life, and through the exertions of several amateur musicians we had frequent concerts, theatricals, or small dances, which often made the winter quite a gay time; indeed, it made us feel how dependent we were on each other for our pleasures. A day in the "camps" country generally on horseback took all thought off cases, and I am still grateful to our doctor, who assumed the post also of riding-master, that I might visit patients at a

distance (wives of the staff were not admitted to the Hospital), for, as he remarked soon after my arrival, you will have to ride to the English ladies, if they are ill, and you might as well learn at once. Many a delightful ride I had alone after that, to say nothing of pleasant parties to places we could not have seen, except by riding over rough, rocky tracks or mule paths the whole way; the sight of trees, a little grass, or the handsome wild oleander by the side of some small river, repaid us well for any discomfort we had had in reaching them. Time passed very quickly with work and pleasure combined. I suppose malarial fever was not more prevalent there than in other parts of the South of Spain. The wives and families of the staff did not suffer more, or as much, from malaria as the husbands, the general health of the English community being fairly good. The winds were very cold in winter, but we had the advantage of a bracing climate, Rio Tinto being some fifteen hundred feet above sea-level.

A railroad belonging to the company runs between the mines and Huelva, a distance of 53 miles through very varied scenery. After leaving Huelva, for some miles there is only flat, fairly fertile plains, with here and there small woods of olive or cork trees, till we reach Niebla—a fine old ruin it is from the train with its ancient-looking walls and gateway; it may have some historical interest. Tradition says it was built by the Moors, but the interior was very disappointing, and not much visited by English visitors, judging by the large number of the juvenile population who followed us when we—a picnic party—explored the town, and only succeeded in entering the church by going half over the place to find the keeper of the keys. After leaving Niebla, the ascent is more decided, and the hills, or, rather, mountains, rise grandly on either side of the railway and river as we pass along between them; some of the ravines are very beautiful, clothed with wild vegetation, and interspersed with clumps of oleanders growing near the streams which finally join the river Tinto. Here and there herds of goats are seen climbing and springing from almost impossible places with marvellous security. Soon we reach the barren, wild country, peculiar, I imagine, to mining districts wonderfully rich in minerals as Las Minas. If the journey was sometimes weary, when frequent visits to or from Huelva had lessened its beauty to us, it was infinitely better in many ways to other Spanish railways. I cannot but remember how tired I was on my homeward journey, notwithstanding all my enthusiasm and pleasure in Seville, and doing as much as most people could do in eight hours, the long, slow travelling from Seville to Madrid. We had wisely supplied ourselves with good water and light wine before we started, and were not inclined to patronise the water-sellers, who at almost every station walked up and down the so-called platform with "*Quien quiere agua,*" "*Quien quiere agua,*" the monotonous cry maddening one impatient to be on anywhere out of the dust and discomfort of travelling in August. To use Mr. C. H. Wood's words, "Everything on Spanish railways is slow and deliberate, as if life went on for ever and time was eternity." Madrid repaid us for all our experiences. After a good night's rest in the comfortable hotel in Madrid, we started next morning for new sights (to me never to be forgotten), and left Madrid for London by the "sad express," knowing that most of our travelling troubles were over, and that my journey home is one of the most interesting events of my Nursing life in Spain.

CATHERINE GILLIES.

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