

There were frequent alterations in and reconstructions of the Company of Barber Surgeons through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in 1745 it split into two companies.

There is at present one freewoman of the Barbers' Company.

In relation to hospital work, we may add that in 1290, Eleanor, the Queen Dowager, was made Warden of St. Julian's Hospital, Southampton. By 1414 (2 Hen. V.) there was an impressive petition for the better inspection and governance of the hospitals, both of royal and private foundation, which had been founded for old men and women, for leper men and women, for sick men and poor women in childbirth. This petition was expanded and amended in 1415, when it became law (Rolls of Parliament IV., 19).

CHARLOTTE CARMICHAEL STOPES.

Our Foreign Letter.

NURSING ON LAKE NYASA.



Most vessels of any size, I suppose, have a ship's doctor, but it is not yet a common thing to find a ship's nurse even on great ocean liners, so that

my experiences in that capacity may perhaps interest your readers. The new steamer of the Universities Mission to Central Africa, the "Chauncy Maples," made her first trip up Lake Nyasa just at Christmas time, and I went with her as nurse. She is quite a small vessel of 200 tons, but she carried eight Europeans and about 80 natives, and the number of slight ailments and injuries was fairly considerable. Lake Nyasa, I beg to state, has a disagreeable way of being very rough occasionally—generally at most inconvenient times. It is rather trying, for instance, to find your staff of house boys all prone on the floor when they ought to be bringing in the breakfast.

Every morning about 10 a.m. I used to repair to the after deck with a bag of dressings and a box of drugs, and all sick folk assembled round me to be treated. If we were at anchor the surgical patients generally took a plunge over the side and came up glistening and dripping, remarking that they had "washed their wounds."

If we were steaming it was generally a matter of some difficulty to find a spot tolerably sheltered from sun and wind, and very often the only place with both these qualifications was a sort of shelf over the engine room where it was dreadfully hot.

When we stopped at the lake side villages people would come on board to ask for medicine and treatment. A few serious cases we took up to Likoma, where our native hospital is; others were given dressings and drugs as they needed, and trusted to administer them to themselves. One poor woman who seemed to be in the last stage of anæmia was brought by her husband to be examined. He was given certain drugs and

instructed how to use them, and as he was a Christian and fairly intelligent, I thought it would be safe to trust him. But a week later, as we passed that same place, he sent to say that his wife was much worse, so I went ashore to see her. I found that she had been taken up into the hills about 5 miles away, so a hammock was hastily tied on to a pole, bearers were found and away I went into the bush. I had foolishly neglected to take a pillow, so had a most uncomfortable journey, though the vigour of my bearers was such that it was soon accomplished. I found the patient to all appearances much the same. Her husband assured me that the medicine had been given as directed and showed me what remained. I had taken some malted milk and Bovril with me, so I showed them how to prepare it, made the patient promise to take what nourishment she could, and came away. But alas! as I stepped into my hammock I saw a small boy standing outside the hut, and in his hand were the tabloids that I had been assured the patient had swallowed. It seemed useless to say anything so I left without any remark, and I heard three days afterwards that the patient was dead. Her heathen relatives had refused to let her take the medicine and her husband dared not over-rule them.

I suppose the long ride in the sun was too much for me, for I was not fit to get up the next day, and had to stay in my bunk. Suddenly I heard a great commotion on deck, and someone came down to say that one of the stokers had caught his hand in some machinery and nearly torn a finger off.

I could not get on deck, so he had to come down to me, and I don't know who felt worse, the patient or the nurse while it was being done up.

The nail was torn right off the little finger, and the bone was laid bare, and the third finger was injured too.

It was only a short voyage, just a fortnight, and now I am on terra firma and doing my dispensary work as usual, but I quite enjoyed the experience and hope to go again some day.

K. M.

An Imperial Pronouncement.

When the German Emperor laid down the law the other day in connexion with the subject of Christian Science healing and forbade his *entourage* to engage in the cult, he courted the displeasure of his Berliners to no small degree. For Berlin, notwithstanding the fact that it boasts of being "the most enlightened city in Germany," is great above its fellows in the cult of the quack. This appears from some recent statistics, according to which there flourish by the side of 2,000 qualified medical men no fewer than 476 professional quacks in Berlin. The fitness of these gentry for treating the diseases of the human form divine may be guessed at from the fact that of the male "healers" 20 per cent. had been servants or workmen, 40 per cent. artisans, and 16 per cent. tradesmen. Among 125 "lady healers" only one had enjoyed more than the most elementary education, while 58 per cent. were of the servant class, 24 per cent. shopgirls, 10 per cent. factory hands, and 4 per cent. sick nurses.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)