

Our Foreign Letter.

IMPRESSIONS OF SOME HOSPITALS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.

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BEYROUT HOSPITALS.



Beyrout is a large seaport town on the Mediterranean Sea, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, with a population of 120,000 to 140,000.

Like all Eastern towns, it is very beautiful and picturesque from the sea, but very disappointing on land. The streets are narrow, dirty, and badly kept, full of ruts and holes, chaos and disorder reigning everywhere, show, pomp, and slovenliness walking hand in hand.

Its beautiful position as a port, with two railways—one to Damascus, another at the foot of the Lebanon—gasworks (all three belonging to French companies), waterworks (belonging to an English company), schools innumerable supported by various nations, two Schools of Medicine (one American, one French), gives Beyrout an important place in the East, worthier of a better state of things.

There are five hospitals—two European, the Military Hospital, the Municipality Hospital, and St. George's Hospital, the only native hospital, belonging to the Syrians of the Greek Church, and of which I was Superintendent.

Amongst my childhood's happiest recollections the

PRUSSIAN HOSPITAL

stands out brightest. Alas! not the wards, nor yet the patients, but the garden, the flowers, the fruit (my mouth waters even now at the thought of the Muscat grapes), Christmas trees, and Easter eggs, hidden in the garden, which we searched for with such joy, and, better still, those good Sisters' bright, happy faces.

Unquestionably, the Prussian Hospital is one of the most beautifully-situated hospitals I have ever seen. It stands on a hill, surrounded by lovely grounds, facing the deep blue Mediterranean Sea, and the stately Lebanon, with its gorgeous colouring, though, alas! barren and void of verdure.

This hospital is supported by the Prussian Knights of St. John of Jerusalem and is nursed by those good Kaiserswerth Sisters with whom Florence Nightingale is so closely associated in our minds. It is connected with the American School of Medicine which stands close by on another hill.

The hospital is a fine building from outside, but unfortunately it was built some 35-40 years ago, when the block system had not come in, so that the ventilation is not good, especially for such a hot climate. The corridors are narrow and the lavatories and sanitary arrangements are not convenient. Lately a fine surgical ward has been built on aseptic lines with a white marble floor, iron lockers, and chairs painted white; a most convenient dressing-stand which wheels about, on which hang three irrigators for the three

antiseptics, a basin for the surgeon's hands, and one for the instruments. I had never seen one before, and thought it most ingenious.

The Kaiserswerth Sisters' uniform consists of dark blue cotton dresses, with lighter spots, spotted white net caps with a box-pleated frill which frames their face and a bow tied under the chin, large white linen Eton collars, and dark blue aprons.

These Sisters have worked away nobly since the massacres of 1860, not only at the hospital, but they keep an orphanage of some 130 girls, mainly supported by a school for paying pupils which is attached to it, the orphan girls doing all the service, cooking, and laundry work.

These orphan girls are also employed at the hospital for the service attendance on the sick, kitchen, and laundry.

The Sisters also employ male attendants for the men's wards. Syrians are very affectionate and kind-hearted, and amiable in disposition, and make very good male nurses.

THE FRENCH HOSPITAL

is worked on exactly the same lines as the Prussian Hospital; that is, it is nursed by a sisterhood (Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul), employs male attendants and the service of the girls from the French Orphanage. It is also connected with a school of medicine—the French School of Medicine, which is supported by the French Government (the French Government allows Syria 500,000 francs yearly for educational purposes), and is of more recent date than the American one. Soon after the commencement of the French School of Medicine the Sisters' little old-fashioned hospital was replaced by a beautiful new one. It is twice the size of the Prussian one, and is more up to date as a building and in all its hygienic and sanitary arrangements. The wards are large, spacious and airy, each having its own bathroom and lavatory, and each ward separated from the other by a beautifully-kept strip of garden, around which the air circulates freely. On the inner side there runs a colonnade or veranda which enables the Sisters and students to go from one ward to another under shelter, and in which the patients are able to sit.

There is a fine operating theatre, well fitted up, an anæsthetic-room, and an ante-room for the dressings and other requisites, all spotlessly kept by the theatre Sister. She gets everything ready for an operation and sits waiting in the ante-room ready to hand anything that may be required, while the students and male attendant wait on the surgeon.

Attached to the hospital is a maternity home in two storeys, the lower being used as an out-patient department for these cases, and as demonstration and lecture rooms for the students. The upper storey is occupied with both public and private wards, a bathroom, a linen-room—most beautifully fitted by the French ladies of Beyrout—a most completely fitted labour ward, including an incubator—and a cosy bedroom for the obstetric physician and lecturer. He spends his nights at the hospital when there are difficult cases, and the good Sisters make him as comfortable as they can.

The labour ward is in charge of a widow who was brought up at the orphanage, a most intelligent, capable woman, who speaks French exceedingly well, understands her work thoroughly, and superintends everything.

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