

And one more word. Anyone who is interested in kitchens should not fail to visit the mediæval kitchen (now fully restored) in the "Grut Huis" of the old Counts of Flanders, in Bruges, which shows all the curious cooking implements of wrought iron used in the fifteenth century, and another interesting one is that in Heidelberg Castle, with its open fireplace at which a whole ox could be roasted.

L. L. Dock.

An Australian Nurse in South Africa.*

I would like to send a few lines to the Journal for the benefit of my fellow nurses in Australia, about South Africa.

Well, from a nurse's point of view, it is overcrowded. In fact, the whole country is too full of workers who have flocked here hoping to "strike oil," and there is none to be found. The girl belonging to the servant class is the best paid. A fairly good cook can get £10 or £12 a month, a housemaid £5 or £6, and the coloured girl rarely works under £4 a month, but a duly qualified and fully trained nurse can only get £5.

Well, I landed first at Cape Town. It is not what an Australian would call charming; it strikes one as dirty and squalid, but later on you get to know your way about, and it improves. Adderley Street is one of the principal streets, and here are many fine buildings—the post office and railway station are here, and most of the banks, and all the buildings are quite modern, but many streets are decidedly Dutch. Nearly all the pavements are taken up by the projecting verandas, called "stoeps," and people have to walk in the road, but these are gradually disappearing, for, according to the old Dutch law which allowed these "stoeps" to be built, they may be repaired and kept in order as long as they are safe, but may not be rebuilt.

There are also beautiful gardens, with some magnificent oaks which are nearly 200 years old; also, an art gallery and museum, several theatres, and that which delights a nurse's heart most—many fine tea rooms.

Accommodation is dear and hard to get, especially for women. When we arrived we drove to an hotel called the "White House," only to be told they were "full"; then we tried the "Grand," with no better success, and three others whose names I have forgotten. At last the cabman suggested the "Royal," where we finally found a place to rest our weary heads at 15s. a day. This hotel is in Plein Street, where some of the Australian soldiers distinguished themselves after the war. As the story was told to me, when the good folk were wending their way homewards from church one Sunday morning, they found they could not get into Plein Street; it had been taken by the Australians, who had broken open all the shops and hotels, and were having what they would call a "good time," by smashing things they did not want. The people here were sorry, as they had done such good work during the war.

But the suburbs of Cape Town are very lovely; so many of the quaint old Dutch houses, most of them still thatched, and their very fine gardens.

Fruit is plentiful and good, but not cheap—but nothing is cheap in South Africa; house rent is very high and living dear.

There are many beauty spots round about. I spent a day at Hout Bay, a most charming drive. You are usually taken round by the sea, and brought home the other side of the mountain, where you see snug little farms and large vineyards, and away in the background you get glimpses of Simons Town and Muizenberg.

Then the trip to Kamps Bay is very nice; you go by the sea and come home by the "Kloof." You can do this by tramcar.

The tram service is electric, and very confusing to a stranger, as the tram company do not care to take the public into their confidence as to where the trams are going, so, in consequence, you have to hail a car and take your chance of the conductor's knowing where he is bound for. It has happened even he did not know.

Well, now, a few lines about nurses and nursing. There is a Trained Nurses' Home, The Victoria Institute, presided over by Miss Damon, but here they do not care to take any but English trainees. The Australian or Colonial nurse has no hope of getting on the staff unless she is well-known to a goodly number of the medical profession; and then, as to the fees, these are only £3 3s. for general work and midwifery; infectious cases, £4 4s. Should a nurse take a room, she will find it difficult to get one under £1 a week, unfurnished—that is, in a decent locality. Two friends of my own have an unfurnished room, for which they pay £1 a week between them, and then they tell me it costs them little under 30s. a week each to live, as it seldom happens they are both in at the same time, so this means nearly £2, and, with so many nurses, they are often waiting ten days or a fortnight for a case, so you see Cape Town is by no means a nurses' paradise, is it?

The "New Somerset" is the only large hospital in the Colony, except that in Johannesburg. Dr. Moffatt is the principal resident medical officer; he is a son of the missionary of that name. Miss Hopper was the Matron till quite lately. In vulgar parlance, there has been a "row," and the Matron and several Sisters and nurses left. The tendency here runs to cottage hospitals; of these there are quite a number round Cape Town—a sort of hybrid between a private and a public hospital. They are usually run with a Matron and a staff nurse; the rest are probationers.

The Matron's salary is generally £100 a year or under, and the staff nurse rarely gets above £60. English-trained nurses always get the preference if these posts become vacant.

Probationers get: First year, £1 a month; second year, £2; third year, £2 10s., and then they are required to pass the State examination, as neither these nor the "New Somerset" hold any examinations. I could send you a list of the last set of questions if you would like them.

I held the position of staff nurse for three months at "Rondebosch," an institution which then had fourteen beds, which have since been increased to thirty. We had six doctors on the staff, the chief of these being Dr. Sinclair Stevenson, who has a great reputation as a surgeon. Rondebosch, as you may know, is where "Groot Schur" is, the residence of the late Cecil Rhodes. The house has been left to the State, and the grounds to the public. These are very fine, and have for a background "The Mountain." One, indeed, gets to love this mountain, with its grandeur. I intend to climb it before I come back to Australia.

F. W. REINHARDT.

* From *Una* (the organ of the Victorian Trained Nurses' Association).

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