

The Irish Nursing World.

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, TEMPLE STREET.

So little sectarianism have we in the large majority of English general hospitals that I was much interested to find in the United States of America that in nearly all the fine cities in the Eastern States each religious sect maintained its own hospital, and, as in no country in the world is there more freedom of religious thought than in America, this distinction appeared the more superfluous. Ireland may be classed as a Roman Catholic country, and it is not surprising to find that the "religious" are taking, as they ever have done, a lively interest in the care of the sick and needy. We progressive civil nurses are just a little apt to assume that we have discovered "nursing"; so, no doubt, we have, in so far as it is affiliated with scientific medicine, but, for all that, let us remember that for generations, when to the civil mind sickness, disease, and death were loathsome, and excited abhorrence, to some of the religious Orders the sufferings of those afflicted with the most nauseous maladies were sacred, and were systematically cared for with sympathy and tenderness, even if their methods of treatment were crude. Thus, from what I saw in the Roman Catholic hospitals in Dublin, I imagine that a great effort to adapt themselves to modern nursing methods, in so far as it is possible, has been made by the religious Orders.

One morning we visited the Children's Hospital in Temple Street, which contains some eighty cots, and where we were greeted by the Rev. Mother, a very "lovely" woman in the American adaptation of the word—signifying a bright, gracious, sympathetic personality. Beautiful old houses have been adapted to the purpose, and, to a lover of Georgian art, it was joy to find that the ruthless hand of the destroyer had not been permitted to sweep away the fine eighteenth century decorations.

From an airy square hall we ascended a very wide, shallow staircase—so constructed for the passing of sedan chairs—where beaux and belles held lively converse at ball and rout in days gone by.

The former double drawing-rooms made fine airy wards, with thorough ventilation owing to the extensive garden ground in the rear. We saw other wards equally bright, presided over by a Sister, with grades of nurses under her, as a school for training nurses in the special care of sick children is actively carried on in connection with this hospital.

Several annexes have been built to meet the needs of modern medical and surgical treatment, the operating department being under the direction of Miss McNeill, as much of the duty in connection with it is considered outside the scope of a Sister's work. This plan of employing a civil nurse to superintend the operating theatre has been

adopted in several hospitals in Ireland otherwise in the charge of Roman Catholic Sisters.

DR. STEEVENS' HOSPITAL.

This interesting old hospital was romantically founded about the year 1740, so that it is one of the oldest hospitals in Dublin. One wonders, as one enters the courtyard, why this institution has quite an Italian appearance, quadrangular as it is in construction, a stone-flagged colonnade surrounding a centre lawn, on to which the lower wards open, and from the corners of which wide staircases ascend to the upper floors. The picturesque roofs are also quite in keeping with the Italian style. "Steevens," albeit not so modern as other hospitals we visited, has been greatly improved, and in the large sunny wards, decorated in very lively shades of colour, excellent results are obtained in both operative and medical work. The hospital contains 200 beds, and a very practical training is given to nurses. As in so many Dublin hospitals, paying probationers are admitted; indeed, in Ireland, women, in the majority of instances, pay for instruction received, presumably because, until quite recently, only one or two years' training has been the rule. Now that so many of the hospitals are extending the term of contract with their nurses to three and four years—some of which time they are employed as private duty nurses, and thus in a measure return the necessary expenditure on their board and lodging during the probationary period—the fees charged for training will no doubt be reduced; it seems unfair that the nurses should be called upon to contribute more than a limited sum for their education, which they do if, in addition to cash payments, they are called upon to give four years' labour either in the wards or on the private staff. We are in favour of women paying for their training in hospitals, and think the time has now come when a scale of fees and curriculum should be defined.

Before leaving Steevens' Hospital I was shown the very interesting portrait of Madam Steevens, the so-called "pig-faced" lady, who generously founded the institution nearly 200 years ago. From the portrait one learnt nothing. The plain face appeared quite ordinary on the canvas, but in life, poor dear! she went veiled, and history has it that what was thereby hidden were best not seen. Was she a leper, or was it the "wolf"? That will remain for ever a secret. Anyway, she had a beautiful compassionate heart, and its merciful dictates remain in evidence to this day.

THE ADELAIDE HOSPITAL.

The Adelaide Hospital in Peter Street, which contains a hundred and thirty-five beds, has the finest suite of operating rooms in the city—quite after the American style, in which marble, glass, brass, and terrazzo play their usual costly and aseptic part.

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