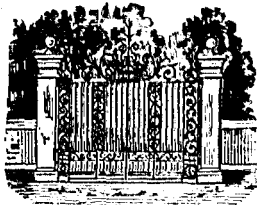


## Outside the Gates.

### INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS NOTES.



On Thursday, June 9th, at 8.30 a.m., some thirty British nurses and one or two other visitors to the Berlin Congress were assembling at Victoria Station, and inquiries were flying about, "Have you seen anyone wearing a red bow?" "Have you seen Miss Mollett?" "Where is the luggage to be weighed?" and questions of a like nature. But at last all preliminaries were settled; old friends had found one another, strangers had made one another's acquaintance, and the party got under way. Conspicuous on the platform were a little knot of "brown nurses," who had come from St. John's House to speed their delegate on her way, and to bring her a posy of sweet-smelling flowers tied up with the colours of the House.

Queenborough was quickly reached; then a six hours' crossing to Flushing, with a head wind and a choppy sea, tested the seagoing qualities of the party. Dinner was discussed in the train, after which spirits considerably revived, and, after an all-night journey—the monotony of which was broken on leaving Holland and crossing the German frontier by a summary summons to the Custom House, and a more or less perfunctory examination of luggage—Berlin was reached at last, just twenty-four hours after leaving Victoria. Everyone was thankful to remove travel-stains, and to get some breakfast. Miss Dock, the Hon. Secretary of the International Council of Nurses, was, even at that early hour, in the hotel with warm words of welcome, and right glad we were to see her.

Saturday found most of the party alert and anxious to make the best use of the day. Of course, the first impulse of nurses was to visit the hospitals and the Victoria House (the Home for Nurses founded by the late Empress Frederick), whose nurses staff the Friedrichshain Hospital (a Municipal one) just opposite. So off we set in six droschkes (taximeter cabs), the foremost containing Mrs. Fenwick and Miss Dock, and the driver of which gave us his ideas in general on a variety of subjects, including social democracy and the proscribed military novel, which he had not read because it was "verboten," but he knew of it, and that "every word was true." He apparently placed a monetary value on his remarks, as we found he charged us just double the fare paid by the occupants of any of the other droschkes.

#### THE VICTORIA HOUSE.

We were all quite charmed with the Victoria House. Fraulein Gervinus, its head, was unfortunately out; but the Sister-in-Charge, in her absence, took us round and showed us everything. The colouring of the walls, both in the corridors, sitting-rooms, and bedrooms, was of a most pleasant tint of greenish grey; over many of the doors were painted appropriate mottoes, the English rendering of two of these being, "Who seeks the happiness of others finds his own," and again, "It is characteristic of a noble nature to be always ready to afford help to others."

After a glimpse at the reception room, and the Oberin's (Head Sister's) office, both comfortably fur-

nished, we passed along the corridors, paved with black and white tiles, and so on to the nurses' bedrooms, models of dainty cleanliness, brightness, and comfort. On the walls, which were green in tint, hung framed photographs, often of well-known masterpieces; the floors were painted, and the curtains of spotless white bordered with red. Red Turkey twill strained across the foot-piece of the bedstead gave also a charming touch of colour. The furniture included the usual wardrobe with inset mirror, chest of drawers, table, and washstand, the appointments of the latter evidently receiving careful consideration. A white linensplasher, beautifully embroidered, hung over one. A similar embroidered cloth lay over the crockery, and cut-glass pots contained the toilet accessories. In the linen-room, order reigned supreme. Here uniforms are given out, the material for a new uniform dress, of lavender striped cotton, being supplied as often as necessary, as no Sister of the Victoria House must ever be shabby. The linen cupboards are object-lessons of tidiness, and their arrangement is evidently a matter of pride. All the linen is cross-folded, and the pillow-cases thus arranged have somewhat of a waterfall appearance.

The Frau Oberin's room, on the same floor, is a charming one; leading out of it is a balcony, bright with flowers, and comfortably furnished with table and chairs—a pleasant place in which to retire for quietude.

The kitchen arrangements are presided over by Sister Gertrude, a fully-trained nurse, whom Rubens would surely have placed on canvas had she lived in his day. She has under her a lady and two servants, and they cook for about 130 people daily. All the appointments were wonderfully complete; the copper sinks were polished to the highest degree, and there was a wonderful array of nickel-plated coffee-pots and kitchen utensils. What, perhaps, elicited most admiration was a kind of dresser on which provision was made for the arrangement of those odd and end kitchen necessities for which in the ordinary way it is so difficult to find a place. To its wooden back were suspended, in orderly array, tins, rolling-pins, and other utensils, while a shelf at right angles was pierced with round holes at frequent intervals, and through these were inserted the handles of wooden spoons, strainers, skimmers, &c., each article being thus plainly visible when required.

All the Sisters after a year and a-half service, wear a medal bearing the Empress's monogram "V. A." entwined with leaves, surmounted by a crown, and suspended from a silver chain. The probationers spend their first six months in the Home, during which time they are responsible for the entire cleaning of their rooms; after they go on to the hospital for their practical work they only make their beds and dust their rooms. Their hours are:—Coffee, 6 a.m.; in wards at the hospital, 6.30 a.m. to 10 or 11; then work till 1; half an hour for dinner, an hour for recreation; coffee at 4, and after that work till 8 or 8.30. There is one half-day a week off duty—for the Sisters from 3 till 11; probationers have to be in earlier.

We said good-bye to the Sister at the Victoria House, and, conducted by Sister Gertrude, made our way to

#### THE FRIEDRICHSHAIN HOSPITAL.

The Friedrichshain Hospital has eleven pavilions, containing from 900 to 1,000 beds. It stands in beautiful and spacious grounds, and there is consider-

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