

The Hospital World.

NOTES ON HOSPITALS IN BERLIN.

By A NURSE.

It may interest English nurses to have a short account of some of the hospitals at Berlin.

Until recently, nursing in Germany has been almost entirely in the hands of religious communities—Roman Catholic Sisters and Protestant deaconesses. When, in course of time, these organisations proved insufficient to meet the needs of the day, the Red Cross Society undertook to train nurses, and the late Empress Frederick founded a Nurses' Home and Training School near Berlin, called the Victoria House. Not long ago, Schwester Agnes Karll started an association for "free nurses," which is co-operative and self-governed. This movement is watched with great interest in Germany.

The hospitals are nursed by these various kinds of nurses, or have training-schools of their own.

As far as I could make out, there seem to be very few free beds in the Berlin hospitals. They have a scale of charges according to the accommodation provided. There is compulsory sick insurance for working people, which entitles them to attendance in the municipal hospitals. Paupers are paid for by their parishes.

We will take the Elizabeth House as an example of a hospital, which is the property of a religious community. The head deaconess and the pastor have almost autocratic control. The deaconesses are under rigid discipline, and all individuality is repressed. Throughout life, unless they fall away from their allegiance, they are dependent on the motherhouse, which controls their working days and cares for them in their old age. Those we saw looked peaceful and happy under their light white bonnets, and we thought we should like to be nursed by them. The wards are old-fashioned, and would shock the aseptic conscience, but the patients looked well cared for and content. We were told by a lady, who works amongst the poor, that they prefer the hospitals conducted by deaconesses. The opinion may have been biased, but it is possibly correct.

A somewhat similar institution is the Augusta House, founded by the Empress Augusta. It was nursed by ladies of noble birth, who had a vocation for that work, but who did not wish to become deaconesses. In return, they are provided for in their old age. A different order of things is being gradually introduced. The furniture is wonderfully ornate and dust-collecting, and must be the despair of those who attempt to keep it clean.

The Kaiser Friedrich Children's Hospital is nursed by the Victoria nurses already alluded to. They are dressed very much like English nurses, and seem to have about the same hours and regulations.

I arrived with a card of introduction from a Berlin physician, and, on stating that I was a nurse, was asked if I would like to join the circle of students in the out-patients' department. A chair was politely offered me close to the doctor, and I learnt more in half an hour than I might have "picked up" in half a year as a nurse in an English ward. Why is it made so difficult to learn with us?

The head nurse (there is no Matron) then took me round the hospital. It is on the pavilion system, each pavilion making up a little world of its own in charge of a nurse and probationers. The assistant doctors have charge of one or more pavilions, and the medical director visits them all. It was pretty to see the little establishment of children having their meals in the garden outside their own particular pavilion. Each ward, as seems universal in the newer Berlin hospitals, has one or two small rooms attached where a suspicious or severe case can be isolated. Each child has his spoon, fork, glass, thermometer, &c., numbered, so that they cannot be passed on to another child. That is what struck me most in Germany—the Germans carry things to their logical conclusion. We bevel off the floors of our wards and then we nail a lath in front to prevent the beds knocking against the walls. We dress up the friends of scarlet fever patients in linen overalls, and allow their skirts to protrude below and their feathery hats above, and so on *ad lib.*

The diphtheria pavilion consists of a wide central passage and a number of rooms, containing one to six beds on each side. At certain spots this passage can be barricaded by a heavy bar, if necessary, so that there need be no communication between one part of the pavilion and the other. I saw a spray at work with which I am unacquainted. The apparatus is about 2 ft. high, and is fixed to the wall and worked by steam from some central engine. A solution of boric acid is placed in the machine. Over the tube (on the system of an ordinary spray) is conducted a current of hot air, which warms the solution as it draws it out and disperses it over the patient, who lies in his cot covered with mackintoshes. This arrangement takes the place of a steam kettle.

(To be continued.)

Wedding Bells.

KENDLE—SCHRODER.—On the 9th inst., at St. Martin's, Brighton, Captain Robert H. Kendle, late Wilts Regiment, eldest son of G. R. Kendle, Esq., of Wilton, Salisbury, to Lotta, youngest daughter of the late F. H. Schroder, Esq., of Brighton.

Miss Schroder was trained at the Royal Infirmary, Liverpool, where she afterwards held the position of Sister. She was a member of the Army Nursing Service Reserve.

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