

The General Hospital in Vienna.

The Allgemeinen Krankenhaus of Vienna has long been one of the celebrated hospitals of the world as a school and centre of medical education. It is a vast caravansary, containing about three thousand beds. Externally it is a most dreary, jail-like looking building, built like military barracks, in long, two-story buildings which run the entire length of city blocks, and those, too, of greater extent than we are accustomed to see.

But once within this jail one finds with amazement a beautiful, green, luxurious park, with massive trees, soft turf, and numerous seats, and, wandering on, one's amazement increases to find eight more smaller, but still spacious, green squares, opening one from another, around which the old barrack-like wards are built solidly. In this plan it resembles the great general hospital of Milan, which is also built around nine great open squares. However, the Milan Hospital, while equally bad in many ways, is a model of beautiful Renaissance architecture externally which does not prevent it from being very unsatisfactory from a professional standpoint, though pleasing to the eye. I was most desirous of seeing the nursing arrangements of this famous old Austrian hospital. Among my earliest nursing recollections was that of hearing the Bellevue internes laugh at the women attendants there—"bolsters with strings tied around the middle," as they described them. Burdett's "Hospitals of the World," so full of details of many institutions, could only say of this one in regard to the nursing, that "As it had no system, its system could not be described," and its enormous size, its fame as a medical school, its dreary, jail-like aspect on the streets, and its bewildering variety of nine great park-like squares within, full of the richest green, made it a most interesting problem. Visitors to the patients were admitted every afternoon, and under cover of the swarms of relatives and friends I wandered about by myself, on several different days, and talked to the nurses.

It is not true that they have no "system." They have one, but it is about as bad as it can be. It is a system of twenty-four-hour duty, alternating with a second twenty-four-hours of what they call "Bei-Dienst," a sort of half-and-half duty, of patients taking their own temperatures, &c. For instance, let me describe one ward where I found a very decent and respectable-looking woman sitting at the table in the centre of the ward. She was middle-aged, plain, and dressed in a calico dress with apron, no cap or any attempt at uniform, just the garb of a decent working woman. She looked worn and thin, but her face was passably good and honest. The ward was a long one, about forty beds, and there were two nurses, herself and another woman, assigned to it.

One came on duty at 7 a.m., and remained on continuously for twenty-four hours. The other one then came on, and the first one was relieved from full duty, but now her "Bei-Dienst" began. That is, she had now to carry the soiled clothes to the laundry, bring up fresh linen for the day, and at eleven o'clock she had to bring her own and the other nurse's dinner, as the one who is on full duty is not supposed to leave the ward. She then had the afternoon to sleep, and at five she went for the supper for herself and colleague. She then had the night. At 7 a.m. she went on full duty for the next twenty-four hours, and the other one assumed the "Bei-Dienst." At each end of the ward was a cubicle, not built *off* the ward, but *in* the ward, occupying ward floor space, and with its wooden partition walls reaching about half-way to the ceiling. These were the nurses' rooms. I asked if I might look at one, and the nurse I was talking with showed me hers. It was just big enough to hold a bed, a small bureau, a small table, and a chair. On the table was the plate with the remains of her dinner, which the other nurse at five would carry away when she went for the supper. I asked her if she slept at night, and she replied that she did not, that they were not allowed to, as temperatures and medicines had to be taken and given at night. However, poor soul, though she is not supposed to be allowed to sleep I was perfectly certain that she did, for how could she help it?

For this work they receive sixteen gulden a month, or about six dollars and a half, and their food. She declared this was much better than a few years ago, when they received only twelve gulden and not all their food. So it seems that there is some progress even in the Allgemeinen Krankenhaus. I asked if there was an "Oberin," or woman head of nurses, and she said no, they were all engaged by the Superintendent (director) of the hospital and were under his orders. By the way, there are no men nurses in the wards; even in the male wards, she told me, all nurses are women.

No organisation at all exists among them. I asked her why all the nurses did not agree among themselves to ask for shorter working hours and to stand by one another, and she smiled a feeble smile, and said it would be a long time before they could do that. Poor thing, she was perfectly meek, passive, and timid, glad only to be allowed to live. She took tips as a matter of course, just as a waiter does, for several of the patients' friends as they went out put money into her hand, as if it was the regulation thing to do.

I thought it a most illuminating and instructive object-lesson. Here is this famous hospital, entirely under the control of men, whose brains certainly place them in the front rank. They teach medicine to students from all over the world; they order the hospital to suit themselves; they regulate the nursing, not interfered with by any women managers or

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