

Our Foreign Letter.

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL
FOR NURSES, SAN FRANCISCO.

We were on our way to the Cliff House when our attention was called to a large building, by the sound of a piano and children's voices. On closer inspection this proved to be The Children's Hospital; we instantly crossed the road, and found on the steps two ladies, who informed us that the sounds proceeded from the kindergarten school of the Hospital. On looking through the window we could see 12 or 14 convalescent children sitting about the room with their toys and singing lustily.

Being a Nurse, I naturally wished to see the interior of a Hospital, which not only provided the means of curing disease, but also the education of the inmates. I inquired if visitors were allowed, and received a kindly "Oh yes!" from one of the ladies, who proceeded to ring the bell. The door was quickly opened by a neat little maid who ushered us into a little sitting room. She delivered my message, and soon the Matron came, and we began a tour of the wards, but learning that I was a Nurse, said—"Oh! I will hand you over to Miss Wallace, the Superintendent of Nurses; she will be able to give you more details of the work than I can."

In a very few minutes Miss Wallace appeared, and made a most interesting guide, taking us over the building and explaining everything.

The interior of the Hospital is arranged on the Cottage plan, just a few beds in each room, the most beds being eight in both medical and surgical wards. The first thing I noticed as being strange—and yet how wise!—was that all the bedsteads were made quite high, so that the Nurses should not have to stoop so much. They were, of course, iron with woven wire mattresses, and folded blankets instead of the hair mattresses we use.

Miss Wallace told me that now she liked them very much better; of course, there where the weather is never very severe, it answers; but I cannot help thinking we should find them very cold here in England.

There are eye and ear wards, also a casual ward for new patients (children) where they stay for three weeks before being put with the others. The sun room is a splendid place for the little ones: those who are up sit and play there, and those who are in bed are wheeled out to get a sun bath. Here the children have a doll's house, which had been turned into a miniature Hospital by the little patients.

Children are admitted free, but adults are admitted by payment of \$25, or £5 5s., weekly. There had

been two operations the day I was there, so I saw the theatre just as it had been used. All instruments are boiled in a small fish boiler with soda and water; both before and after use, they are rinsed, and washed in perchloride. Everything used is sterilized before using, and the Nurses wash their hands first in a solution of permanganate of potash, next in carbolic, and lastly in perchloride solution.

The children's wounds are not dressed in bed as with us, but each patient is carried to a little dressing room adjoining the ward, placed upon a table, the dressing changed, and then carried back to bed again. All surgical requisites are kept here, and this simple arrangement saves a great deal of unnecessary labour.

The diet kitchen looked such a delightful place, and one could well imagine the tasty dishes prepared by the Nurses, invalid cooking being a part of their training. A lady-cook gives a course of lessons each year, and an examination follows.

Then, there was the children's dining-room, with such dear little tables and chairs, for two and four occupants. Here a nursemaid takes charge of the little ones, so that a Nurse's time is only used for a Nurse's work.

Thinking that a few details of a western Nurse's life might be interesting to your readers, I asked various questions about hours and duty, &c. A Probationer, after a preliminary examination in reading, writing, arithmetic, and English dictation, is accepted for a month's trial, and then, if admitted as a pupil, is paid \$8 a month for the first year, and \$12 a month for the second year. During the latter period they may be sent out private nursing at the discretion of the Superintendent. Only two years' training is given. The hours of duty are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; one hour off each day; half-an-hour for dinner; half a day each week; three hours off every Sunday; and two weeks each year. The uniform is a pale-blue striped cotton dress, small mob caps, white aprons, collars and cuffs; and they are allowed two clean dresses a week, and I thought, Oh! how generous.

Lectures are given from September to May twice a week, a preliminary examination at the end of the first year, and a graduating examination at the end of the second year, when each successful candidate receives her diploma as a trained Nurse.

The Nurses receive their maternity training in the Maternity Home, a separate building in the same grounds. At the end of the two years each Nurse is given her first case, to start her well in her new life, sometimes it is in the Hospital, when she receives \$35 a month.

In a great many respects this Hospital, in the far West, could teach good lessons to those in the mother country; and, certainly, if all Nurses had such a thoughtful, considerate Superintendent as Miss Wallace, there would be fewer complaints of over-work and under-feeding.

Miss Wallace represented the Hospitals of the Pacific coast at the Nurses' Congress at the World's Fair, and the Committee kindly gave her a month's vacation, and all expenses during that time. I wonder how many English Hospitals would do the same.

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Registered Nurse.

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