

terse and practical as they are humane. Candidates for admission as pupils must be over 20 and under 40 years of age. They must bear a good character, and have received a fair general education, and, of course, be healthy. The "pupil's" education is conducted on much the same lines as the education of an English Probationer in a good Hospital.

Explicit directions are set forth for her guidance in a pamphlet of 22 pages. The dignity and necessity of obedience, reserve, gentleness and tact are explained clearly and simply. In separate paragraphs the duties of a Nurse are treated. Beginning with behaviour to each member of the staff, the writer goes on to give lucid instructions concerning every domestic medical and surgical detail that is likely to come within the Nurse's range. Possible doubts, difficulties and mistakes are provided for with the greatest forethought.

Among other minutiae, the Nurse is told to "mend her clothes during her hours off duty, to study her book of Nursing instructions, and to divert herself with other good books from the library." The Night-Nurse is informed that she "may brew tea for herself on a gas-stove, but that she must, of course, make no noise, for fear of waking the patients."

At the end of a year, the "Pupil" is expected to pass an examination. If she succeeds she is "Nurse." If for two years after that she gives satisfaction, she receives her diploma (in solemn conclave) and is henceforth "Sister of the Red Cross" (Rudolfinerin) wearing the badge of her Order on her left arm.

Pupils receive payment as soon as the first month of Probationership is over. They are strictly forbidden to take money from patients or patients' friends. (At various Hospitals a regular system of bribery was at one time in vogue; patients paid to save themselves from neglect.) The salary rises with the rank of the Nurse, the Sister receiving 20 florins (33s. 6d.) a month besides dress, board, lodging, laundry, and—pen, ink, and paper! In case of good service she has a sure prospect of permanent pension and home.

Before receiving her diploma, the Nurse has to sign a declaration in which she binds herself to serve the wounded in case of a national war.

Private cases may be nursed at their own homes by "Rudolfinerinnen." The authorities of the Society exact that they be well treated and cared for, but in no case may they accept gifts of money. Where gratitude suggests donations, these must be paid into the general pension-fund.

In case of war, the Rudolfinerhaus is to be reserved, as far as possible, for the wounded, and every available Sister is to be employed on ambulance duty. Service in time of war counts double.

The election of Director, Medical Superintendent, and Matron is an annual ceremony, re-election being

optional. The present Matron has held her position for twelve years.

The Nurses of the Rudolfinerhaus are to care for the *sick*, not waste their energies by doing menial work. All scrubbing and polishing is performed by servants—by men in the male wards, by women in the female wards. I mention this particularly, as in all other Hungarian or Austrian Hospitals I visited, more or less of charring, cooking, washing, window and boot cleaning was expected of the Nurses. Sometimes, as in the Rochus of Pesth, the Sisters literally did *everything*.

A course of popular ambulance and nursing lectures for women is held every year by various physicians of the Rudolfinerhaus. These are well attended.

There is no doubt that the Rudolfiner-Verein is forcing public opinion by sheer excellence to respect the dignity of Nursing as a profession, quite apart from religious or humanitarian motives. It is undermining morbid prejudice against Lay-Nurses (happily, in England, a thing of the past), and gaining honour for those who are enjoined by its statutes to honour themselves.

It wanted a pioneer like Professor Billroth to force a way out through the tangled weed-growth of false sentiment, and to lead his followers on to airier heights, where a brighter light could show them the wisdom of old Saint Augustine's words: "There is always something beautiful about Truth, even where she wounds us."

The great pioneer has passed away very recently, leaving his life-work as his best monument. Those who knew him describe him as a handsome, proud-looking man, a born ruler of men, with all a good ruler's sympathy for the least of his people, with all a good ruler's eagerness to take the heaviest load on his own shoulders, and with all a true worker's intolerance for those who shirked their duty.

It may not be generally known that Billroth was a native of the Isle of Rügen, and passionately fond of the sea to the end of his life. He was the son of a clergyman, destined for the Church. At the university he discovered the real bent of his mind, which he followed without hesitation. He was exceedingly fond of music, and had a marvellously fine ear—Brahms was his favourite composer. All his senses seem to have been intensely acute, and his genius many-sided. He was an excellent teacher, a practical philanthropist, a good physician, splendid organizer, and, above all, *a surgeon*. He went about all things he undertook with an earnestness that was in itself a passport to success; but the deepest enthusiasm of which his intense nature was capable was reserved for his profession.

L. MOLLETT.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)