



Our Foreign Letter.

A NURSING COLONY.

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The Nursing Community of Bielefeld employs another class of Nurses, called "Free-Helpers, in various dependencies. These Free-Helpers are ladies who work without remuneration, subordinate to the Sisters. They are usually employed in domestic, culinary, or nursery branches of the work.

As to these actual branch-stations of the settlement, it is impossible to give a fair idea of their net work of usefulness in a small space. In many parts of Germany, in England, Scotland, India, China, Belgium, Holland, Russia, America, and Africa, there are Homes for every kind of human misery and helplessness, worked by Sisters or Brothers of the community.

In the sanatorium for scrofulous little children (250 of these are nursed in suitable climatic surroundings at Sassendorf and Salzuflen), the Free-helpers prove very useful in amusing and guarding the little ones, when the Nursing Sisters (of whom there are few for the number of patients) are professionally employed.

The Sisters employed by the community undertake private cases without exacting any remuneration, and irrespective of the wealth or poverty of the patient. Any case is considered suitable, if it has need of skilled Nursing. Although no rule compels them, patients who can afford it are expected to offer a donation to the general fund of the community. For *herself*, the Nurse may not accept any gift.

The Doctor's House of Sarepta is a separate building. There is also an isolation-house, a "scrap-house" (which I shall presently refer to), a "stamp-house," a new orphanage, and a house for financial business. Besides these, numerous other stations are closely connected with the Mother-house and regarded as its special property, among them a lunatic asylum for ladies in Lippe-Detmold, a beautiful country house, bequeathed to Sarepta for this purpose by the late Dr. Meyer.

The average increase of stations connected with the community of Zion, is at the rate of ten stations a year. Not the least useful of these is a dining room for factory workers, in which a wholesome dinner is prepared for workmen occupied at some distance from their homes in town. The rate of payment is 1d. to 1½d. Little as it seems, I have learned from those experienced in "people's kitchens," that good management and good cookery can make such a system fairly self-supporting.

The "scrap-house" is a depository for odds and ends sent in as contributions to Bielefeld. Friends of the

community are invited to send bales of *anything*, in the way of worn-out clothing, metal, leather, paper, glass, and china, *unsorted*. The last item is especially emphasized, as the sorting is an occupation for many of the patients. The wool is plucked, cleansed, and worked up into felt and homespun; old gloves are manufactured into leather and wall-paper. I cannot give a list of all the useful things—new and resplendent—into which useless household rubbish is converted. The "scrap-house" *pays*, and forms a source of income.

The Probationers and Novices of Sarepta (Novices are called Auxiliary Sisters) are treated much like the Probationers of similar Institutions, for in 1891 the greater number of Deaconess Mother-Houses—63 in all—formed a union, in which it was decided to make the fundamental rules for the Sisterhoods similar. 8,478 Sisters belong to this Union, those of Sarepta among them.

The actual dignity of Sisterhood is rarely conferred upon the Novices before they have known four years' service, not counting the preliminary Probationership, during which they wear no uniform or cap.

The Sisters receive no salary, but are provided for by the Institution, in sickness, health, and old age. They take no vow of celibacy, as is often erroneously supposed. At any time they are free to quit the Union of the Sisterhood.

In a form drawn up in parallels, comparing the tendencies of Sisters of Mercy and Deaconesses, Pastor Siebold remarks that Evangelical Nurses should never desire a monopoly for their work, "robbing those most nearly concerned of the blessings of trial, and allowing as many as possible to share the personal labour of serving charity"; that they should only be found there, where there is actual need of their services; that they should discourage a selfish foisting of patients into Hospitals, when said patients "might well be nursed at home by their own families"; that they should never make their profession "a cushion for comfortable, lazy Christianity to rest upon"; never be found there where mother and daughters could very well do the nursing themselves; never make a neighbourly charity useless, but lead the house-wife to the sick neighbour, and instruct her how to nurse the patient properly." The Deaconess is "to enlist helpers for the night-watches, encourage families to prepare soups, etc., for the sick, to care for a just distribution of donations. . . . Evangelical Deaconry is to encourage mutual aid and industrious labour"—in short, *avoid pauperizing*.

Passing over the northern bridge of Sarepta into the forest, we come upon the "Children's Home." In fine weather the sight that meets our eyes will be a pretty one. Numbers of children are digging in sand-banks piled up for the special purpose of ministering to their architectural and engineering instincts. Other children are nestling in hammocks suspended from the branches; again, others are being wheeled about in little carriages, either by Nurses or by older and stronger children. Wee babies are among the crowd, that, in spite of pale faces, stunted growth, deformed limbs, and hectic brightness, is no sorrowful assembly.

The little ones have often been saved from wretched surroundings. Many are orphans, numbers worse than orphans. Here, at all events, while they are ailing, they have a *home*, with all that makes a child's home loveable. Sunshine, and the cool shade of forest

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