



Our Foreign Letter.

NORWEGIAN LEPER HOSPITAL.

AFTER a strain of heavy work, my doctor ordered me away to get a good brain rest, sound sleep, the maximum of air with the minimum of fatigue, and suggested a sea trip to Norway as likely to combine these advantages; so, having secured the companionship of some friends, I started in the end of July. I have never had brought home to me, in a manner more forcible, the dire results of "calculating without one's host"; in this case the sea representing the "host." I do not think I ever had one whole day of enjoyment, unmixed with more or less severe discomfort, the whole time I was on board. The mid-night sun remains a matter of faith to me; and as for quiet rest, if you wish a thoroughly noisy corner in life, and noise from which there is no escape, commend me to "board ship"! Of course one always has something to endure travelling, but the amount of noise, which seems quite gratuitous, is truly remarkable.

Certainly, Norway by land and Norway by sea have been well and effectively described, and to that literature of travel I have no intention of adding; but after reading an account of the large General Hospital at Trondhjem, I think a short account of the Leper Hospital there may also interest the readers of the NURSING RECORD.

After a drive lasting about three-quarters of an hour, we reached the Hospital, or, indeed, Leper Settlement one might call it, which is most delightfully situated on the top of one of the little hills which rise on every side, with every conceivable freak of formation. It was a lovely, fresh, sunny morning, and the air blew sweet from hay-fields and woods. The main block of the Hospital is neatly built, two storied, a centre, and two wings. A stout, kindly-looking woman came out of a side door as we drove up to the main entrance, her arms full of homespun wool and large keys. She looked much amazed at her visitors, and utterly bewildered as to how she was to communicate with those "impossible British"! A man came to her aid, and between them they grasped the fact that we wanted to see the doctor, and we comprehended that the doctor was ill. However, the card of introduction with which we were provided was duly sent to him, and after a little delay an interpreter, in the form of a patient, who, being an old sailor, knew a little English and German, having been brought to their aid, the pair, who seemed Master and Matron, proceeded to conduct us round the house. One corridor runs the whole length of the building, and is crossed by two others the length of the two wings. Off these the

wards open, and the corridor windows look to the court and out-houses, while the wards look on to the garden and fields. The one side is for women and the other for men. The doctor's house, where he lives with his family, being in the centre. The wards are small and contain from six to eight beds; these are covered with grey blankets and looked very narrow, but not uncomfortable. At the head of each a black-board was fixed. A white line divided the board in two; on one side prescriptions were chalked up, and, on the other, the diet. The prescriptions were conspicuous by their absence, "Tinct. Opii" being the most general, and the diet was indicated by "No. 1" or "No. 2," with the addition, now and then, of "milk." By each bed stood a locker of stained wood, on which the patients had their little picture and possessions, and the women kept their work. It was quite wonderful to see how those poor creatures, many without fingers could knit, and do fine, beautiful crochet. The men seemed worse off for interest and occupation, and I could not find out that anyone from the outside world tried to bring any brightness into their lives. The windows of the wards were full of plants on the men's side, and they seemed to care well for them; but, alas, *not one window in any ward we were in was open!* The summer air was so sweet outside, I longed to break some panes of glass as I went round! I could see no ventilation in any of the wards except what I think was intended to regulate the draft needed for the stoves. The stoves were of iron, and were stoked from the outer corridor. Most of the nursing was done by the able-bodied, but there were a certain number of paid attendants who did all kinds of work all over the house. Behind the doctor's house was the chapel, large and bright. What a curious congregation must gather there! I think the saddest sight of all was the children that were in the Hospital. I much regretted that the doctor was not with us; I should so much have liked to have heard from him if there were any hope of arresting the development of the disease when taken so early. We heard, however, that they had regular school and teaching, which was a good thing. Apart from the main buildings, there are some small houses where families live together.

When I got south to Bergen, I tried to see the Leper Hospital there; but, though I went with a medical man, we could get no admittance, and could not even see the medical officer to try on him the effect of our powers of persuasion. I was very sorry, for I had been given to understand that the Hospital at Bergen was larger, and the nursing and treatment more scientific than at Trondhjem. While at Trondhjem, I was also much interested in visiting what seemed to be an institution taking the place of a Workhouse Infirmary in England. Like your correspondent, Miss Poole, I had strayed down to the "Hospital's Gate" thinking to find the General Hospital of the town, and seeing what looked like an institution of some kind, I went in. I was most civilly received by an officer of the place, who showed me all over, and helped my halting speech with quick intelligence. It seemed to be a Home for old, infirm, and incurable people. It was all so bright and homelike, that I thought, with sadness, of the infirm wards in our State-supported "Houses," which are *not* Homes.

E. J. R. LANDALE.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)