

Nursing in East Africa.

IN connection with the arrangements of the Volk's Hospital, Bloemfontein, it is interesting to compare those of other African Hospitals. On the east coast there are three Hospitals well known to me, that of the Universities' Mission at Zanzibar, the French Hospital in the same place, and the Hospital at Mombasa, formerly under the management of the Imperial British East African Company, but recently, since the dissolution of the Company, taken over by the British Government. In all of these Hospitals it is held essential that the wards should be raised well above the ground, in order to escape, so far as may be, the malaria, which inevitably hangs about the low levels. In none of these Hospitals are patients ever wheeled out of doors on their beds. It would be deemed a most unsafe and unwise proceeding. Windows and doors are always set widely opened, and so much fresh air admitted that the patients practically have all the benefit of the open air, while they are exposed to no draught. I well remember occupying a ward in the Hospital at Mombasa for many weeks. It was surrounded by a verandah which afforded protection from the glare of a tropical sun, and on to this verandah opened four door windows on a level with it. The air was always fresh; bees, and other tropical insects, including a centipede (which a native boy explained was highly poisonous and promptly killed with his bare foot), wandered in at will. The view from the bed was a delightful one, right up the harbour, in which men-of-war and other vessels lay at anchor. Beyond this was seen the settlement of Frere Town, with the picturesque red roofs of its houses, among the palms and mangoes which surrounded them, and behind this foreground was an expanse of country with the blue hills of the mainland in the distance. It was a pleasant place in which to be ill, and the Resident Medical Officer, Dr. Macdonald, inspired one with his own belief that eventually one would get better, a result which was eventually attained, thanks to his skilful treatment and care, but in bed and indoors it was decreed that I should remain, and there I was a fixture for weeks. Only once was this stringent rule relaxed. The English fleet, seven men-of-war, including the flag-ship, were coming up to Mombasa, and see it somehow I should, the doctor declared. When he said so I knew it would be done, and so waited content. One morning the Nurse came in, rolled me up in blankets, and was immediately followed by the big doctor and a friend, who picked me up as if I were a baby, popped me down in a chair on

the verandah while the fleet passed, and whisked me back to bed almost before I knew I had gone out, but with this one exception bed was my portion for many a long day. Evidently, therefore, precautions which are a necessity in East Africa, are not essential or even advisable, further south.

It is interesting also to note that the bedsteads used in the English Hospital, Zanzibar, are of the same type as those which find favour at Bloemfontein. Wire woven bedsteads are the order of the day in both places. In the Hospital at Zanzibar those used by European patients are supplied in the ordinary way with mattresses, and mosquito nets in addition. Those used by the natives are covered simply by a native mat and pillow, on which they lie, with a coloured blanket above them; these are shaken and turned every morning, and the bedsteads are all cleaned once a week with paraffin. Nothing could be more satisfactory, and though, when the Hospital was first opened the majority of people shook their heads and said, "Of course you will never be able to keep a Hospital in the tropics *clean*"—to the credit of the Nursing staff, both European and native, it may be said that a more daintily clean Hospital than that of the Universities' Mission will nowhere be found, and the pest of insects with which it was threatened, exists in the imagination of pessimists only. Few people, however, who have not lived in the tropics can understand the constant labour which this entails.

M. B.

The Queen's Commemoration Fund.

IN our issue last week we referred at length to the proposed scheme for augmenting the Women's Jubilee Offering by a national subscription in commemoration of the sixtieth year of the Queen's reign. Our esteemed contemporary, the *Times*, has an interesting article on this subject, in which it refers to the benefits conferred upon the poor by the visits of a District Nurse and the lessons she instils, not only in Nursing, but also in sanitation, cleanliness and tidiness.

To some of the views expressed in this article we must, however, take exception. We are told that, "inspired by a praiseworthy ambition to maintain a high standard of Nursing so that the poor should be put on practically the same footing as the rich, the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute laid down the following requirements for the District Nurses whom it was prepared to recognise:—(1) That they should

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)