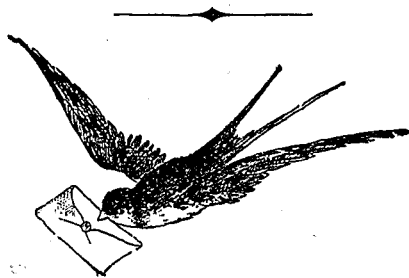


The Committee of the Glasgow Women's Hospital are happy in being able to report that there has been during the past year no fatality amongst the cases upon whom operations have been performed during the past year, though the number of operations is eighteen more than last year. This is the third year in succession in which the committee has been able to make this satisfactory announcement. It is now appealing for £5,000 to equip a more commodious and suitable building, the number of applications for admission being far beyond what the institution can possibly receive. The £3,000 which was asked for by the Coventry Jubilee Committee in order to clear the hospital of debt and to open a new ward has all been subscribed with several hundreds of pounds in addition.

A new wing containing eight beds has been erected at the Samaritan Hospital, Belfast, at a cost of £1,000, half of which sum was contributed by Mrs. Forster Green. The wing was recently opened by this lady, and Miss Benn, in the presence of a large and representative assemblage.



### Our Foreign Letter.

#### CITY OF THE SUN, CENTRAL ASIA.

I FEAR if the authorities of the York Road Lying-in Hospital, where I received my midwifery training, could pay a flying visit to the far east, they would be horrified in the extreme when they saw the primitive way in which we manage matters here. It is impossible for us to conduct midwifery cases in a really aseptic way, owing to the habits of the people, which are more like those of animals than of human beings. They are aptly described by the phrase "Their manners which are none, and their customs which are very disgusting." One day I was asked to attend a girl of thirteen—a pretty little thing, the youngest in the harem of a very rich man. When she saw me she begged that, if I had any power at all with my God, I would procure her a son. I told her no one could tell whether the child would be a boy or a girl until it was born. "Oh," she exclaimed, "I have paid hundreds of chilkees\* to the Dies† who can tell, and they all say I shall have a son. I will give you a hundred chilkees if you give me a son, and not one pice‡ if it is a daughter." She asked if the child would be born soon, and I told her that it would not be very long. She then gave an order to a waiting-woman, who ran off in great haste, and brought back three women with her. They began clapping their hands and dancing round the poor patient; then one

\* *Chilkie.* A silver piece of money worth about tenpence.

† *Die.* Native midwife.

‡ *Pice.* Half a farthing.

woman left the room and came back with a very large sword in her hand. Each woman in turn flourished it about the patient, and said some prayers, and then very carefully placed it in its case and under the patient's head. I asked the meaning of all this, and was told that if the child was a boy no evil would happen to him, and if he grew up to be a man he would, if necessary, wield the sword for his religion.

In due time, the child was born, and proved to be a girl. The poor little thing had a very cold reception. "What, only a girl, all this pain and trouble and only a girl, alas, alas." I kissed it, and called it by all the pet names I could think of. The mother said "You had better keep her, what can I do with her." I assured her that in a few days she would be very fond of her. Mother and child did well, and one day after the woman was convalescent I went to see them. I found with them a girl of seventeen, in whom I was very interested, and another woman of about forty. This poor woman was dreadfully marked with small-pox, but I soon found out she had a kind heart in a very disfigured body. After the usual salaams they kissed my hands, and wanted to kiss my feet, but I would not allow this, so they persisted in touching them whenever they could. Then they gave me melon and almond nuts to eat, so I knew we were in for a chat. I let them talk as they liked, hoping that I might lead them on to subjects in which I was interested. It was a great advance that they were willing to talk to me, for at first I could not get their ear in any way. They wanted to know so much about myself, why I was not married, why I had no jewels, why I wore boots and stockings, etc. After answering their questions as to our customs, I said, "Now I want to know something of yours." I turned to the young mother, and asked why she did not want a little girl, as she seemed so fond of it now. She only answered "I do not know." The elder woman answered, "You see, mem, what our life is. Who cares for us, or who loves us but a son. A son always loves his mother, and we save up all the rupees our lord gives us from time to time for our sons, so that when they grow up they can marry, and take us to their homes. But a girl, who will marry her? She must live the life her mother did before her, or remain a maiden, which no woman can do in our land. It is such a disgrace." I asked if she had a son, and if so why he had not taken her to his home. She said, "Oh yes, I have two sons, beautiful clever boys, they feed me every day, and buy me clothes and everything that I want." She added that her lord's favourite son was not one of her children, and "not so clever as mine, but he helps in the office and obeys all orders, so his lordship has given him a portion. Soon he will be married. You see those new rooms that are being built in the Compound. They are for him when he brings home his wife. She is of good birth, but not rich. It will be a happy day for me when he marries. Then my reproach will be taken away from me. I was once his lordship's favourite, but I took small-pox, and then after that abscesses formed all over my body. See how I am marked. From the time I had small-pox I have not seen his lordship's face, except when I have peeped at him through the lattice-work, but he always sends me cloth and a little money from time to time through my sons." I asked how many wives his lordship had, she said, "Only three. The first is childless; the second has one son and five daughters; the third has never had a child to live." I asked if she had ever seen these

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