

broad-minded and public-spirited a woman garbed in the religious habit, and yet half an hour's intercourse convinced me that here was to be found the ideal nurse *and* woman—a very worthy disciple of St. Bartholomew's traditions.

The wards of the new Somerset Hospital are beautifully lofty and airy, with a fine verandah outside each one, with an outlook over Table Bay, and the Blandberg hills in the distance. The Lady Loch Ward is the pride and joy of the hospital; it contains ten children, and the walls are painted by hand to suit juvenile tastes. Lovely landscapes and bowers of flowers surround the little patients on all sides, and they seem a very merry party in spite of their ailments. Each child answered to a special pet name—"Dr. Jim" being very much to the fore. The Operating Theatre is also justly a source of pride—the floor and fittings are of marble, the walls tiled, and it is fitted with a powerful force of electric light, to facilitate operations by night and day.

There is a very large out-patient department, and the Nurses' accommodation was charmingly arranged. Each nurse had an airy, nicely-furnished cubicle, their sitting room was on the ground floor, and was very spacious and cool.

The stone was laid lately by Sir Alfred Milner for the addition of a large new wing, which extension will greatly facilitate the working of this admirable hospital. On the medical staff I found Dr. Moffat (who gained such golden opinions as medical officer to the English Hospital at the Piræus during the Græco-Turkish War). His reminiscences of the campaign were interesting and amusing, and I was charmed to make his acquaintance.

The New Somerset Hospital is at present a Government institution, but arrangements are being made to have it supported by the Colony in the future—a suggestion which seems to afford satisfaction to all concerned.

THE VICTORIA NURSES' INSTITUTE.

The length of my stay in Cape Town being only five days, I regret that I missed Miss Miller, the enthusiastic Hon. Matron, when I called at the Victoria Nurses' Institute, so named as a memorial of the Queen's Jubilee. This excellent institution has in view two objects, and I have no doubt they will be speedily realised.

(a) To provide a centre from which the wants of the public can be speedily and efficiently supplied with certificated and registered nurses.

(b) To furnish a Home to Properly Trained Nurses, at a much smaller cost than they can obtain in any other way—and by thus drawing them to one centre, developing an *esprit de corps* which will tend to raise the standard of the Nursing Profession in Cape Town and the whole Colony.

The nurses take their own fees, working on a co-operative principle, and only paying a percentage of one shilling in the pound to cover working expenses.

Miss Miller has lately addressed a letter to the Press, advocating the extension of the work of the Institute.

The Institute, as Miss Miller remarks, is now an accomplished fact, and in working order, but much still remains to be done. Considerable extension in the good work is contemplated, but this can only be carried out with the sympathy and co-operation of the public. At present the staff of nurses at the Victoria Institute is kept almost entirely occupied with private work. A few years ago the supply of nurses in Cape

Town was entirely inadequate; to-day, the well-to-do classes can usually procure that scientific nursing which is so essential in cases of sickness, and which often means just the difference between life and death. But the Committee of the Victoria Institute do not wish merely to meet the private requirements of the well-to-do. "Their aim," to quote the Matron, "is to bring scientific nursing within the reach of all, and until that be accomplished their labours are incomplete." Within the reach of all—those more particularly who are not in a position to obtain a private nurse under existing conditions. After all, the most pitiable cases are not those which occur in the mansions of the rich, but in the sordid dwellings of the poor and needy. I am aware that there are agencies in this city performing noble work in this respect, but the field is extensive and the labourers are few. Moreover, apart from the purely "slum" localities there are many households in which the sick cannot obtain the attendance they require. The Institute Committee have a worthier ideal than merely to supply skilled nursing for those who are in a position to pay handsomely for it, and hence the present appeal to the public in the interests of suffering humanity. The work of the Institute has been started on a sound basis, and the object now is to bring nursing "within the reach of all." This, as Miss Miller points out, cannot be done by any central committee. It must be the work of some leisured residents in each district—eight districts for the city are suggested—who are willing to devote a portion of their time to the useful work of organisation.

Other schemes are brought to the notice of the public, all of which have for their central idea the general distribution amongst every class of the community of the advantages of nursing. The application of the joint stock principle is pretty universal nowadays, and a practical system of nursing on some such lines promises to prove useful. For instance, it is suggested that in cases where the exclusive use of a trained nurse is out of the question, a fund might be raised out of which part expenses might be met. Then there is this most excellent idea of making provision for young men in boarding-houses or lodgings. The landlady cannot do all that is required in such cases, and a great deal of misery is the result of perfectly preventable causes. All that is wanted is a little organisation—some system of the kind outlined in Miss Miller's circular. Under the scheme for the extension of the work of the Institute young men are invited as it were, to take out shares in a Human Health syndicate. If there are dividends to be drawn they may prove of inestimable value, and if not—well, so much the better for the shareholder. Let us suppose that a fund was raised by one hundred young men, each of whom subscribed one guinea annually to some recognised centre. This would secure in case of need one, or if necessary, two visits daily from a thoroughly qualified nurse. "I am fully assured," says the matron of the institute, "of the inestimable boon this would prove to many who are in delicate health, and have no home but a boarding-house, and therefore, with the cordial approval of the Victoria Nurses' Institute Committee, I am prepared to do all in my power to further this project." I sincerely hope that the scheme will be carried from the print and paper stage into that of practice. It is a form of health assurance, possibly of life assurance, of which the premiums are low, nor will they vary.

M. R.

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