

breakdowns. So long as no skilled nursing is obtainable on board ship, however, it is absolutely necessary that a nurse should be sent home with such patients. I myself came home with one who was dangerously ill, and I have no hesitation in saying that without the care of a nurse she could not have reached home alive. A ship, even under the best conditions, is anything but a desirable place in which to be ill. The authorities dislike the idea of a death on board, indeed the ship's doctor—not for the credit of my country, I am glad to say an Englishman—proposed to the captain, who mooted the idea to me, to put us ashore at Aden, and that in the month of May, with the Red Sea getting hotter every day, and when the one hope for the patient was to get her as speedily as possible into a cooler climate! Of course, I refused point blank to be stranded in the way suggested, and had the satisfaction of seeing the patient begin to pick up directly we got a breeze from the north.

But if the position of a patient who has a nurse in attendance is not altogether enviable, that of one who has not is desolate indeed. He is dependent entirely on the good offices of a steward—not for skilled nursing, for this he cannot give—but for the performance of the many little necessary offices, and for bringing him such food as he can eat. Such services are usually rendered more or less willingly, according to the length of the sick man's purse, but the life of a steward on a passenger ship is necessarily a busy one, and his duties are not calculated to admit of his devoting much time to the care of sick passengers. I well remember the misery endured by a passenger who was suffering from dysentery and who was far too ill to leave his berth. Amongst minor discomforts I may mention that after a day's coaling at Aden, when he lay beneath an open porthole, he was covered with fine coal dust, which he was absolutely incapable of removing, and so had to endure.

From a nurse's point of view I may say that the strain and anxiety of nursing a really serious case on board ship is great. There are, of course, absolutely no conveniences for nursing, and it is night and day work, so that it is impossible to get much rest.

I may point out that beyond the consideration for the welfare of the sick, the establishment of hospital cabins would be beneficial to other passengers. It is by no means uncommon for sleeping cabins to open into the dining saloon, and if such cabins are occupied by patients suffering from dysentery or kindred diseases their danger to the healthy does not need emphasizing.

I am aware that the proposal that all passenger ships calling at tropical ports should carry a trained nurse, though I believe it to be eminently desirable, is not free from practical difficulties. One of these is expressed in a letter which I have received from Miss Gertrude Ward, the Matron of the British Hospital, Algiers, who I hoped might be able to be here to-day to take part in this discussion. She writes, however, that she will not be in England, and says:—"Your subject sounds very interesting, and I should imagine that West Coast boats would do well to have a hospital cabin and a nurse, but not all passenger ships surely—for how little there often is to do, even on East Coast boats—often not a single sick passenger—and how demoralizing for the nurse! I always think that for a ship's doctor the life is idle and empty enough, and should dread the effect of it on a nurse even more."

There is no doubt that this difficulty exists, and that, on the outward bound voyage at least, a nurse would, as a rule, have little to do. Still, cases so often do occur in which efficient nursing is essential, that I think that with proper organization the difficulties should be overcome. If a scheme were arranged, for instance by the Matrons' Council, nurses who had worked for some time in hospital might with benefit to themselves be sent to do duty for a single voyage. There would be no disadvantage in changing the nurses frequently, as with each voyage there is an entirely new set of passengers.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK: I should like to point out that the fact that we are to-day considering the Nursing of the Sick at Sea is due to the keen interest taken in this subject by Miss Mary Kingsley, for whose premature death we are all now sorrowing. It appears to me, therefore, that it would be an especially suitable memorial to her to commemorate her idea as to hospital cabins by establishing them on west coast boats.

Speaking as one who is a very bad sailor, I am of opinion that the services of a nurse even on ordinary passenger ships would be most useful. Passengers are often completely prostrated by sea-sickness, which from whatever cause arising is very real suffering. On one occasion when I crossed the Atlantic, I was nearly poisoned by a bad smell which pervaded my cabin. Ultimately, in spite of assurances to the contrary and owing to a knowledge of hygiene, I discovered a leakage which accounted for it, and insisted upon new accommodation.

I am certainly of opinion that it would be very advantageous to have hospital accommodation on passenger ships, and in expressing my thanks to the Comte de Cardi for his admirable paper, desire to support the suggestion he has made.

The usual votes of thanks were then passed, after which the President declared the Conference closed.

Appointments.

MATRONS.

MISS JESSIE MACGILLIVRAY has been appointed Matron of the New Joint Hospital, Springvale. She was trained for three years at the Kilmarnock Infirmary, and has since been first Sister and then Matron of the Thomas' Walker Hospital, Fraserburgh, Aberdeen.

MISS EVELYN HILTON has been appointed Matron of the Paignton Cottage Hospital. She was trained at the Newark Hospital and subsequently at Charing Cross Hospital, and has, since 1898, held the position of Matron at the Sussex, Brighton and Hove Throat and Ear Hospital.

NIGHT SUPERINTENDENT.

MISS MARY L. POTTER has been appointed Night Superintendent Nurse at the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Royal Infirmary, Dumfries. She was trained at the Paddington Infirmary for three years, was Staff Nurse at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, Sister at the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, and for the last three years has been working at Guy's Hospital.

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