

Our Foreign Letter.**PRIVATE NURSING IN BOMBAY.**

MR. F. A. REDDIE, the Hon. Secretary of St. George's Hospital and Nursing Fund, Bombay, kindly gives us further information concerning the pay of the private nurses attached to the hospital. Our point is that *no profit whatever* should be made out of the labour of trained nurses by charitable institutions—a very undesirable method of augmenting the funds of many hospitals, still thought quite justifiable by male governors and, we regret to say, by some Matrons, whose salary is increased as Superintendent of the private nursing branch.

Mr. Reddie writes:—

A copy of your excellent paper, dated 29th September, reached me some weeks ago, and I regret I have been unable to reply earlier to the information asked for on page 259.

You will perhaps understand that I am still correct in my statement as to the non-deduction from the wages or earnings of the nurses on the Private Nursing Staff, when I point out that the nurses employed both in the hospital wards of St. George's, and those sent out to nurse private cases are employed by the Sisters of All Saints, and the nurses sign an agreement to serve so many years first in the wards, and then, if they wish, and the Sister-in-Charge approves, they sign an agreement for another two years—for Private Nursing.

Under the rules of the institution they are paid a fixed salary, and no deduction is made from this.

People employing their services pay to the institution Rs. 5 per diem for the use of the nurse, a percentage of this is paid to the nurses in addition to their fixed salary.

A nurse when 'in' from a private case, is housed and boarded free of cost, her uniform is found, her washing is paid for, her holiday expenses, travelling, board and lodging for one month are defrayed out of the Nursing Fund—and she gets full pay also.

Before me is a letter, dated the 13th November, from Major Pilgrim, P.M.O. of the Calcutta General Hospital, who has returned from a mission to see how nursing institutions are managed here and in Madras, and he writes:—

"I found Madras worse off (numerically) for nurses than Bombay.

"The system under which nurses are organised for providing St. George's Hospital (Bombay) and the public (private nursing) with nurses is nearly perfect.

"Money is your only requirement to secure perfection."

I think you will agree with me that, seeing nurses are not paid higher wages elsewhere in India, our nurses are not so very badly off.

I do wish we could pay them more, as the work is hard, but every nurse's life is a hard one—as I know from experience, seeing my sister is one in London, my wife was a nurse—and I have two cousins nursing.

Rs.60 a month is equal to £48 a year, and in addition to this a nurse is given her quarters, food, uniform, and washing free.

Kindly let me know what a nurse of some three years' service is paid in England, what she is paid if she goes sick, for what period she receives half pay,

also if her travelling expenses are paid if she takes a holiday, and what hospital supports nurses on full pay for one month, and feeds and lodges them at the same time.

The Chapter of St. John of Jerusalem recognised the splendid work then done by our nurses, during the first years of the plague epidemic, and awarded the Order of Hon. Serving Sister to Sister Mary Edith of All Saints; Nurse Remy, late of the Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital, now Matron of Bai Motlebai Hospital; and Nurse Leavers, of the St. George's Hospital, is to receive her Order later on when others are gazetted. These were selected as representatives of the local hospitals.

We learn from other sources that the services of private nurses are very badly paid for in India, especially when the strain due to climate is taken into consideration; and we feel sure English nurses working in India are much more comfortable and safe when attached to the staff of a reputable hospital than working on their own account. If the nurses of the Private Nursing Staff of St. George's Hospital, Bombay, receive a salary of £48 per annum, together with a percentage on their earnings, as well as the advantages enumerated by Mr. Reddie, the Hospital probably makes no profit; but we think that the accounts of the hospital and of the private nursing staff should be kept entirely distinct. We believe the authorities at Guy's Hospital pay travelling expenses and Saturday to Monday holiday expenses for their nursing staff. We shall be pleased to hear from any other institution giving information in answer to Mr. Reddie's questions.

NURSES ON PLAGUE DUTY.

A nurse who has been in India on Plague duty for upwards of two years, and who hopes soon "to find her foot on English soil," says that the nurses wishing to sign for longer plague service are now being asked by Government to sign for six months instead of a year, and that it is evident the authorities hope for a permanent abatement of this terrible scourge. Our correspondent adds:—"Two more nurses are going to be married, which makes a great number of happy events." We have received several complaints from nurses sent out to India on plague duty, of the "horrors" of the cheap second-class passage, which is all Government provided on the P. and O. steamships. They complain most bitterly of the overcrowding and noise—say it is impossible to get rest or sleep—and one nurse writes:—"On the journey out I was simply miserable, and landed a complete wreck for want of sleep, and firmly made up my mind that the P. and O. second class should see me no more." Surely the least that the India Office should do for women sent out on such dangerous and self-sacrificing work, is to provide a comfortable passage, thus enabling nurses to land in good health and fit for duty.

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