

## The Hospital World

### THE ITALIAN HOSPITAL, QUEEN'S SQUARE.

The Italian Hospital, Bloomsbury, is a cheerful place in which to be ill, and the sunny wards looking on to Queen Square, though occupied mainly by Italians, yet contain patients of many nationalities, Germans, French, English, and others.

The cheeriest of Sisters in the quaint blue habit and wide winged cap of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul responded to my request for the Sister Superior on a recent visit to the Hospital. "You wish you see *ma sœur*?" she enquired. On my intimating that my object was to see the hospital she at once offered to show me over it. We began with the large dispensary and outpatient department, where we encountered "*ma sœur*." "You should have been here an hour ago" she said kindly, "when all the patients were here, Italians, Germans, Poles, Greeks, all sorts." The linenry revealed great cupboards stocked full of well kept linen which it is the pride and pleasure of the Night Sister to keep in good order. In the front of the building the wards take up its whole length. At the back are smaller ones, as well as rooms which are used for private patients, or for such cases as it may be desirable to isolate. For infectious cases there is a separate block, entirely cut off from the rest of the hospital, and containing kitchen, bath-room, and room for the nurses in attendance. At the very top of the hospital is the chapel, small, but well furnished, and tended by careful and reverent hands. Passing further down the passage which leads to it, one comes out on to a spacious flat roof, where, in the summer, the convalescent patients spend much of their time, enjoying the fresh air, and playing games. A large lift runs from the top to the bottom of the hospital, and in addition a service lift for food connects the wards with the kitchen.

The Board Room is a comfortable room containing some interesting portraits of the late King Humbert, and of Queen Margherita of Italy, the latter being an autograph one. There are also pictures of the present King and Queen of Italy, and one of the beautiful medallion presented by King Humbert to the Countess Orтели in recognition of the efforts of her husband on behalf of the hospital.

I learnt from my guide that the Italian Hospital is nursed entirely by the Sisters of St.

Vincent de Paul. Originally a French Order, it embraces members of many nationalities. Some of the Sisters received their nursing training before joining the Order, and are certificated nurses.

On the doorstep I said something about the work of St. Vincent de Paul. "Ah," said the Sister, "if you would read the life of St. Vincent you would know"—I assured her I knew something of his life, what trained nurse indeed who knows anything of the history of her profession does not? Was not he one of the first to try to provide for the sick the care of refined and skilled women? We can scarcely now-a-days get beyond the rule which he laid down for the Sisters whom he devoted to an active instead of a contemplative life as was usual in those days. "They shall have no monasteries but the houses of the sick, no cells but a hired room, no cloisters but the streets of the town and the wards of the hospital, no inclosure but obedience, and for convent bars only the fear of God. For a veil they shall have a holy and perfect modesty, and while they keep themselves from the infection of vice, they shall sow the seeds of virtue wherever they turn their steps." Does not this represent the ideal of a nurse's life at the present day? Do we not know that the care of the sick demands every thought every talent, every faculty we possess? Our calling indeed seems at times almost vampire-like in the claims which it makes upon us. Its scientific side demands all our thought, our patients, besides our constant work, must have also "the voice of love, and the smile, and the comforting eye," if we wish our professional work to be of the utmost benefit to them, and on its public side we still have room for heroines and martyrs, who, placing self on one side, are content to serve the profession they love for the sole reward that

"Because right *is* right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

Who is sufficient for these things? But at least we may take comfort from the fact that a lofty idea of what is involved in the calling of a nurse has been cherished since the days of St. Vincent de Paul, and that it still exists.

M. B.

Madame Vialar, who has just died, was "*première cantinière de France*," a title given her by the French Minister of War, in 1855, for the care she took of wounded soldiers in the Crimea.

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