

round hats; workmen in caps, ladies fashionably dressed, women in shawls, and boys and girls. Many of the older people bear marks of the strain of anxiety and familiarity with trouble. There is little conversation. A few peals of the big bell clang out, and a deeper quiet follows. From the open door at the back of the gallery the cool morning breeze floats in.

Soon a nurse in snowy cap and apron and fresh as the morning appears, and is quickly followed by others, till in a twinkling there are over a dozen in their places. A glance at their refined and kindly faces must reassure anxious parents. Each nurse at once attracts a knot of inquirers, and holds a series of brief but earnest interviews. The hum of conversation fills the room. A cheery laugh breaks out now and then, in another place a grave answer and shake of the head sends the visitor away down-cast, but in general the result of the interview is satisfactory.

An important part of it is the transfer of gifts for few visitors come empty-handed. Many bunches of flowers are handed up—daffodils, lilies, tulips, spirea, wallflower, and others in their season, as well as pot plants, till the front of the gallery becomes a flower show. Then there are toys in the form of balls, coloured balloons, dolls, tambourines, Noah's Arks, etc.; also books, magazines, newspapers, and letters. Some considerate parents bring the "News" Book of Views of the Exhibition. Mysterious little paper parcels are likewise tendered, sometimes to be rejected as mistaken kindnesses, but in general to be accepted, as is everything that is accepted, with marked appreciation by the ladies in the gallery.

Arrangements are now made for a glimpse of patients who have reached convalescence, and then the visitor hastens out. Some patients appear at the open windows towards the north-east corner—where they are within sight, or nearer still on the high terrace—where they are within earshot—of anyone on the roadway in Bilsland Drive. At the south-east corner the grounds slope downhill, and patients can be spoken to from a neighbouring railway embankment when the policeman is at church. On the south side the balconies are near the roadway, and conversation is easily carried on there with little folks. In all cases there is a plentiful display of waving handkerchiefs. Whether seen or unseen, the events of the day serve to keep the patient in touch with home, while the visitor turns cityward feeling that the practical visitation of the sick, even in this abridged form, has been at least as good as a sermon.

## The Hospital World.

### THE DUFFERIN HOSPITAL FOR INDIAN WOMEN IN CALCUTTA. HOW TO REACH THE PURDA WOMAN.

A lengthy correspondence has been carried on for the past few weeks in the Calcutta daily papers concerning the Dufferin Hospital for Indian Women. All the present correspondence tends to the positive opinion that hospitals and dispensaries must be opened and kept going for purda-women. But according to the *Indian Medical Record*, the experience of Calcutta is that purda-women don't want and won't have hospitals and dispensaries. Surely the opening and expensive fitting up of that palatial hospital in Harrison Road, with all its impenetrable screens and other appurtenances to render purda-women secure against the vulgar, scrutinising gaze of men, with the history of its complete failure was warning enough. Such a lesson, such dearly bought experience, winding up with the sale at a dead loss of the hospital, ought to have opened the eyes of those responsible for the Fund to the fact that purda-women will not leave their homes to enter a hospital. To leave one's home on a visit to hospital, means, to purda-women, all the agonising fear of exposure to public view. Only those who are intimately acquainted with the sensitive feelings of our Indian fellow-subjects in this regard, can estimate the insuperable difficulty that exists to induce a purda-lady to leave the privacy of her home. What is the remedy under the circumstances? To our mind the case lies in a nutshell. "Purda-women" are purda-women. Centuries of custom and centuries of prejudice have established the *purda-nashin* system, and it will take centuries to uproot or destroy it. Nothing but the general education of Indian women and their emancipation from the thralldom of social inequality—nothing but *liberty*, such as it is known among other Asiatic races, such as the Parsis—we purposely exclude reference to European races—will draw aside the "purda," and open the way to that free resort to Western medicine as we find it in the lower stratum of female Indian society. For the present, and for many years in the future, it is, and will be, impossible to disestablish the "purda." Indian ladies subject to this custom will, in our opinion, never resort to any hospital or dispensary. If the Dufferin Fund for supplying medical aid to Indian women is to reach the sacred precincts of the Indian home, if it is to convey its blessings to that sisterhood of the human family in this country, a class that has much in it to command not only our warmest sympathy, but our admiration and respect, let the Fund, and those responsible for its efficient and satisfactory dispensa-

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