

## The International Council of Nurses.

### NURSING IN BRAZIL.\*

By MISS JANE A. JACKSON,

*Matron and Superintendent, Strangers' Hospital, Rio de Janeiro.*

There is not any real training school for nurses in the whole of Brazil; but every now and then there is a great talk about one, and then it dies out again. In the native hospitals here there are not any nurses at all, the work being undertaken by Sisters of Mercy of the order of St. Vincent de Paul, and under them, in the male wards, they have men who wear linen uniforms, no collars or ties, slippers without socks, and who smoke cigarettes. They call them "serventes." I believe at times they give them the title of "infirmiere," but as the doctors here give us the same name with an "a" at the end of it, I object to calling these dirty men by the same name.

In the large hospital here, the "Santa Casa di Misericordia," which has two thousand beds, the management is the same; the Sisters get up at midnight, and four o'clock to give the medicines, leaving the wards otherwise in charge of these men. It is a beautiful building, but the patients and bedding are filthy.

In the hospital for the insane, which is just below us here, the work on the female side is now under the care of French women, who have had some little training before coming out, but they are not certificated. That being a State hospital, the Sisters are not employed there.

In the San Sebastian Hospital for yellow fever they have boys, who have been trained there (but not certificated), under the superintendent, Dr. Seidel, and two years ago I had one from him, who is still with me. He is very clean, but I had to teach him how to sponge patients, make beds, etc. Now, he is most valuable, as he knows a great deal about yellow fever with all its sequelæ, and I can leave him alone at night with patients. He can take temperature, pulse, and respiration, and also, if the patient should have any heart-failure, which is very common in yellow fever, he knows just when to give caffeine. I consider that a great deal in a Brazilian. Patients are never washed, or I might say very rarely, in the native hospitals, and very often fresh patients are put into the beds without any change of bedding.

In San Paulo, at the Hospital Samaritano, they train probationers, and I have received a letter from the medical superintendent, from which I quote:—

"Dear Miss Jackson,—In reply to your letter of inquiry I can only state that as far as San Paulo goes, there is absolutely nothing done as to organization for training nurses. In the Samaritano all our staff nurses are home trained, and we have only two probationers' places.

"We require three years of training, including medical and surgical work. If they finish the term that is a proof that the work has been satisfactory and a certificate to that effect is given.

"In the national hospitals the trained nurse is an unknown quantity. Roman Catholic sisterhoods are nominally the source of supply of nurses, but what is done is done by un instructed persons, male and female, who frequently have been patients themselves, and, showing some interest in their fellow patients, have been asked to remain as nurses.

"So far as I know Brazil and its hospitals, you may state that with the exception of one or two, such as the Strangers' and the Samaritano, which have English trained nurses, there is no such thing known in the native hospitals as the Trained Nurse in our acceptance of the term. They are in this respect at least a hundred years behind the times.

"W. LOUDON STRAIN, M.D."

Buenos Ayres is very much more ahead than Brazil. The Matron who was there for eleven years left last November. She was from St. Thomas', a Miss Eames. The head nurses have mostly been trained at home, and yet they have promoted to the post of Matron one of their probationers, with only the training there, which Miss Eames did not think quite sufficient.

South America has still to be roused up, for it is 25 years behind every other place. Every Brazilian doctor or visitor who comes up here exclaims at the cleanliness of the place, and ourselves, in our white uniforms, and the greatest compliment that they pay us is that we are most punctual, and better able to adapt ourselves to sick nursing than the Brazilian.

I am only sorry that I cannot send you a better account of nursing in the capital of Brazil. All we can do is to try to keep up to the standard, as far as we can; that we learned at home, and that is difficult in a country where everything is lax.

### Good-bye to Miss McGahey.

On Thursday, Miss McGahey left England on her long homeward voyage with warm good wishes from many friends. She is immensely impressed with her visit to Canada and the States, and has promised to use all her influence to help on the great work of national and international co-operation amongst nurses in the Australian Commonwealth.

\*Report submitted to the meeting of the International Council of Nurses at Buffalo, U.S.A., September 16th, 1901.

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