

## Our Foreign Letter.

### IMPRESSIONS OF SOME HOSPITALS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.

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#### THE BRITISH SEAMEN'S HOSPITAL, SMYRNA.

While my friends packed themselves in several carriages and drove off gaily in search of sights, antiquities, and Turkish embroideries, I got into a carriage by myself and drove off to the British Seamen's Hospital with a letter of introduction from the hospital at Athens. I got there at about 10 a.m., and, though I had given the driver double his fare, he threw back the silver coins at me and shouted and gesticulated as though he had never been so "done" before in his life. The language and gesticulations were truly oriental, otherwise how like a London "cabby" or, for that matter, any other driver in any part of the globe; after all, as a French philosopher once said, "Human nature is much the same all over the world, and certain circumstances and surroundings almost invariably bring out certain qualities."

I walked through a dear little garden, beautifully laid out, in which grew lovely chrysanthemums of all sizes and colours, some bearing blossoms as large as any I had seen in England at flower shows. To the left of the footpath was a pretty little house, originally built for the doctor, and now occupied by the house-keeper, and straight in front was the hospital.

The instant one entered, one felt one had stepped on to British soil and was breathing British atmosphere. To the left there was a waiting-room, to the right, the doctor's consulting-room. There was a parquet floor and the furniture was thoroughly good and solid-looking, so unlike the light furniture one usually meets with in the East.

I sent up the letter with my card, and soon two ladies came down, dressed in indoor uniform, asked me upstairs, and took me into their sitting-room. It was small, but it was nice and bright and had a beautiful view. The furniture was delightful—a couch, comfortable wicker chairs nicely padded with cushions, a fireplace, a mantelpiece, photos, pictures, all of which combined to make one feel at home, and gave one a sense of comfort and rest, to say nothing of a delicious and most refreshing cup of tea.

After the hospitals at Athens and Alexandria, it appeared a wee place, for, including a little building for infectious cases, it barely contains thirty beds; but for brightness, comfort, proper organisation and administration there is no comparison.

There were lovely flowers everywhere, screens (unknown articles in all foreign hospitals), comfortable chairs, books, tables; in fact, it was fairylike and homelike, and not over-furnished.

As to the patients. Though one expected to see nothing but sailors, yet I found that others were admitted, and that there were some private paying wards which may be occupied by women.

There are two English nurses only, but they have plenty of help from servants, and, all said and done, when a hospital is not a training-school, with plenty

of domestic service and attendance, actual skilled nursing does not fall heavily on two nurses to twenty patients, even with occasional night duty. Anyway, these two nurses seemed very happy and comfortable, and though one of them was of course senior to the other, and therefore was head, yet they worked so harmoniously and happily together that it was a real pleasure to see how unselfish and nice they could be to each other.

They have a very nice operating theatre which I must not omit to mention. The hospital is mainly supported by the Government, and is under the Foreign Office.

#### THE SCOTCH HOSPITAL, SMYRNA.

From the Seamen's Hospital I went on to the Scotch Hospital for the Jews, but when visiting the patients I was glad to see that others besides Jews are admitted.

This hospital is, I believe, mainly supported by funds left by a Scotch lady who was a great admirer of Lord Beaconsfield (which accounted for his bust adorning one of the passages), and who wished the money to be used for the benefit of Jews.

The approach to the hospital is not impressive, as it stands amongst other houses in a street. In fact, it appeared to me more like a house than like a hospital or any other institutional building. Fortunately, Eastern houses are built very open and spaciouly, with open courts, courtyards, and gardens, so that in this case the evil is mitigated, though one was conscious of lack of air and ventilation, and in these days, when the block system is so much studied, one could hardly say that the hygienic conditions had been studied.

Being a small hospital (some twenty beds) the wards were small, but they looked very nice and comfortable.

The operating theatre contains some very handsome appliances. The apparatus for sterilising the water is a very large and complicated one, as perfect as could be bought anywhere; the table is also an excellent one, and so were the sterilisers for the instruments, but they had no glass cases for the instruments when they had been sterilised, and they were kept in a drawer in an adjoining room. This I always consider a very great disadvantage, apart from the aseptic side of the question; there is the inconvenience of the surgeon suddenly finding during the operation that he requires other instruments than those prepared. Everybody's hands are engaged or soiled, and suddenly a search has to begin for the various instruments in the different drawers. Thus precious time is lost, and what is equally serious is that the instruments may not be aseptic. Otherwise, it seemed to me that this theatre was exceedingly well and handsomely equipped, perhaps out of proportion for the size of the hospital; yet I heard that there is an Armenian who attends the hospital who has studied in Edinburgh, and who is an excellent surgeon and has performed some wonderful operations.

The house of the resident doctor (a Scotchman) was situated just across the garden, so he was within easy reach.

The chief attraction and use of this hospital is that the two nurses who are there are training native nurses, one of whom is a Jewess. They have a sitting-dining-room of their own, which was very nicely furnished and provided with a good bookcase.

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