

## Our Foreign Letter.

## JAPANESE HOSPITALS AND NURSING.

Yamamotodori, Kobé, Japan.

DEAR MADAM,—It may interest your readers to hear of the Japanese hospitals and nurses I have had the privilege of visiting within the last few days. Oddly enough, on my return from Osaka yesterday my English mail had just come in, and, with it,



your paper with a picture of Japanese nurses. Not two hours previous to seeing this, in a little address made to some Red Cross nurses at the Military Hospital of the 5th Division, I had mentioned how very appreciatively the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING had written of Japanese nurses.

The first Japanese hospital visited by me, at the suggestion of Madame Hattori, wife of the Governor of Kobé, was the large Government hospital. I was received with the greatest courtesy, and taken round by Dr. Layuki, the Director of the hospital. Unfortunately, there was only one officer on the staff who spoke English, and that not fluently; however, nothing could be more courteous than the way in which the Director took me through the whole of the rooms devoted to out-patients, where everyone seemed very busy with patients. The whole staff wore white linen overalls, the nurses' skirts being very short—about four inches from the ground. The nurses (women) were without exception intelligent-looking, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed girls, and wore the badge of the hospital in red on the front of their very high caps. What struck one particularly was the absence of noisy footsteps, as all were shod in the Tabi—white thick cotton socks—and all spoke in low voices. The whole tone of the hospital seemed admirable. The chief of the nurses, to whom I was introduced, was a young-looking woman, very gentle and unassuming. We found her in her own room, which was quite in the Japanese fashion; a few cushions on the floor to sit on, a cabinet, the inevitable vase with a lovely spray of flowers, and a hibachi with burning charcoal, constituted the furniture. A long central corridor extends through the whole length of the hospital, at right angles to which run verandas, out of which open the patients' rooms, each patient having his own room, furnished very much in foreign fashion—iron bedstead, spring mattresses, and bed-clothes as in our hospitals. At one end of each veranda, or rather corridor, is a pleasant nurses' room, and I understood there were about fifty nurses to 150 patients. The nurses' living quarters were in the grounds. The equipment of the hospital seems very up-to-date, with plenty of space for everything; the floors are of polished dark-brown wood, with the exception of the operating theatres, which are tiled with blue and white tiles—the furniture of the theatre being entirely of metal and glass. The Director seemed to take a pardonable pride in a large glass cupboard of instruments, all made in Japan. There are

no free beds; all patients pay according to a scale of charges.

The next Japanese hospital I visited is in Osaka (the Venice of the Far East), a three-storeyed building, containing nearly a hundred beds. As in the other hospital, patients have each a separate room, as the chief nurse explained Japanese do not like to have several sick people together in one room. The floors in this hospital were also of polished wood; the rooms were furnished Japanese fashion, with the exception of those for the first and second class, which had foreign bedsteads. The nurses were dressed similarly to those in the Government Hospital, but wore a different badge in their caps, the chief nurses wearing special gold badges.

A Japanese friend with great kindness accompanied me to Osaka, and acted as my interpreter. The Superintendent is Dr. Kekechi, a major-general on the reserve in the Japanese Army, and had just received orders to prepare for active service. His brother, another medical man, assists him in the management of the hospital, which is a private one owned by them. There is a nurses' school attached, to which the Government drafts nurses for special training, a large number of Red Cross nurses being there at present. Each floor has three chief nurses, and there is a head chief nurse, a charming lady, who took me round the hospital and showed me nurses' rooms, theatres, massage rooms, and many interesting cases, amongst them being eleven badly-burnt cases, which were receiving most devoted attention from the nursing staff. The Superintendent spoke of Florence Nightingale, and told me each of his nurses possessed a picture of her, and knew of her noble deeds, which they would strive to imitate.

The head chief nurse was treated with consideration and respect by the two doctors, sat with us, and was told what I said (here I may mention that, as a rule, the women in Japan seem to have perfect freedom in going about, or in their social relations with men, but *they* show the respect to men which *we* expect to receive from our men), so that it was a pleasant surprise to see this special courtesy paid to my sister nurse. Of course, we all walked round without shoes, and when taken through a roughly-floored outside passage I wore high patters. As I am no longer young or a light weight it seemed to me a very perilous proceeding, but no disaster happened.

On leaving, the Superintendent gave us an introductory letter to the Director of the Military Hospital of the 5th Army Division. We were received in the administrative block of the Military Hospital by a Surgeon-Colonel, who told me he had been telephoned to that an English lady was to visit the hospital. He informed us they were expecting wounded soldiers from the war, but none had arrived yet. A number of Red Cross nurses had been drafted in for service, and he would like me to see them all together if I would address them. I gladly complied, as I was proud to be able to tell them how their good training and services were recognised and appreciated by English nurses, who, if wanted, would gladly give their services to nurse the brave Japanese soldiers and sailors. In this hospital there were wards of six beds each, scrubbed white-wood floors, and no need to remove one's shoes. The patients looked spotlessly clean and well-cared for, in most comfortable beds, and

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