

one could never enter those wards without finding from four to eight nurses at work.

The beds were nice, modern iron beds, with good mattresses, generous pillows, and the linen sheets looked well-kept and ample. Beside each bed was a modern glass-topped metal table, and every man had his own set of very pretty glass flasks of uniform size, one for milk, one for wine or water, and one for medicine. His medicine bottles were also there, for him to take his own doses of what I think we would call the t.i.d.'s. Under each bed, strangest of all to American eyes, stood in matter-of-course array the vessels which we keep in the lavatory and bring out on occasion only.

As we went through the ward it became evident that several of the men who seemed like convalescent patients were in reality the "nurses," or "servant-nurses," and presently there emerged from a door a young nun, dressed in black, with a close black cap and a white apron. She was followed by one of the men "nurses," who carried a large tray on which stood a basin with solution and pledgets of cotton, and a bowl containing a pile of tiny and most dainty little glass phials.

The Sister carried a hypodermic needle, and, to my interest, I found that she was going to give a number of more important medicines, which in Italy are given hypodermically as a routine treatment. Each tiny phial held one dose of medicine hermetically sealed. The Sister broke the seal, filled the needle by inserting it into the neck of the phial, and went rapidly from one patient to another, cleansing her needle as she went with the cotton in solution. She administered thus iron, guaiacol, and a number of other drugs which we would be quite unaccustomed to give in this fashion. As the patients bared their arms numerous old punctures were seen, but all looked well—the Sister did not seem to have abscesses complicate her work.

The other wards we saw were long and not so large. They held fifty beds. Surgical dressing-rooms and operating-rooms were plain, but neat and orderly. The physicians have a most beautiful library, adorned with wood-carving and paintings by old masters. Their rooms are in the ancient "cells" once occupied by the monks, and the Sisters are lodged in similar fashion.

The whole hospital is immense and superb in details, but I will not try to describe it. It accommodates 1,300 patients, and forty Sisters are detailed to it for day and night. This proportion shows that their work can be only supervisory, with little actual nursing. The marvel to me was that it could look so well. The floors are terrazzo, and we saw the "servant-nurses" sweeping them with wet sawdust, which seemed an excellent detail. The wet sawdust was thickly sprinkled over the floor and then swept up with the clumsy-looking Italian broom, leaving the floor perfectly clean.

In the art and architecture of Venice many records are found of old times of plague and pestilence. For instance, in the Scuola di San Rocco there are frescoes on the walls of the staircases depicting the plague at its height and its abatement, and the magnificent church of Santa Maria della Salute was built in commemoration of the plague of 1630. Within is a marble group showing the Virgin exorcising the plague demons, and to this day the festival is observed which was instituted in gratitude after the disappearance of the pestilence. Although there are several other churches in Venice also built in expiation or in gratitude in plague times, this one is the most important.

It so chanced that I was there on the festival day, and all the streets near the church were filled with the booths and carts of the vendors of candles of enormous size. People came from all over the city, rich and poor, and everyone gave at least one candle as an offering.

L. L. Dock.

The 'Rural Midwives' Association.

The first annual meeting of this Association, the object of which is to train and supply midwives for rural and provincial districts, to assist in starting local associations, and to obtain help and co-operation for the work through county councils, union infirmaries, guardians, and existing charities, was held recently at 3, Grosvenor Place. Sir Michael Foster, M.P., presided. He said that the Association had reason to be satisfied with the progress that had been made during the year, though it had to contend with many difficulties. In the first place, it was stated that one effect of the Association would be to hinder the development of the thoroughly-trained midwife, but he was prepared to deny that it would have any such result. The object of the Association was really not so much to protect the midwife herself as to assist the rural poor by seeing that they were provided with proper attendance in the hour of need. It had also been stated that their efforts tended to put ignorant persons into a position for which they were not fitted by Nature; but the care that the Association was exercising in regard to the women selected for training was a sufficient answer to any objection of that kind. He denied also that there was any danger of the Association's encroaching on the duties of the local supervising authorities of county councils and other public bodies, and concluded by moving the election of the Executive Committee. Sir John B. Tuke, M.P., seconded the resolution, which was passed. Mrs. Heywood Johnstone moved the adoption of the report, which stated that during the year twenty-three women had been sent to training institutions, and that the Association at present had ten midwives and several monthly nurses at work in nine counties. So far, however, the funds had not enabled the Committee to make any grants to very poor villages towards training and starting a midwife. The motion was seconded by Dr. Boxall and adopted. The financial statement showed that the receipts for the year amounted to £726. Mrs. Holme, Mrs. Hobhouse, and Mr. Heywood Johnstone, M.P., addressed the meeting.

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