

Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



At a recent meeting of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England a petition was read from the London School of Medicine for Women in reference to a proposal, now before the Council, that women should be admitted to the examinations of the College. It was determined to inform the petitioners that the matter is receiving consideration. It seems almost incredible that medical women have not ages ago been admitted to such examinations. We might still be groping in the benighted days of the barber-surgeons!

A performance of "Mice and Men" will be given on February 21st, at 2.45 p.m., in aid of the Knollys Memorial Hospital, a movement under distinguished patronage to secure a memorial to the late Colonel Knollys and Mrs. Knollys, who by their united effort founded and carried on with such success the Distressed Gentlefolks Aid Association.

The aim of the Hospital is to help those who, not being eligible for charitable institutions, are not able to secure the best medical and nursing skill in their own homes.

Hospitals, as apart from Nursing Homes, for the middle classes in London and other large towns are one of the crying needs of the hour.

The Mayor of Bath (Mr. S. Bush) is endeavouring to signalise his year of office by raising £5,000 for the Royal United Hospital. He has received a letter from Mr. Henry Overton Wills, of Kelston Knoll, Weston, Bath, stating that, providing the sum in question is raised, he will subscribe an additional £1,000. Mr. Wills gave £1,000 to the Bath Art Gallery, whilst his Bristol donations include £10,000 each to the Queen Victoria Convalescent Home and to the proposed Bristol University.

Human skeletons have been found under the floor by workmen engaged in demolishing an old house at Newport, Essex, known as Hospital Farm, which was used as a hospital in the time of King John.

The Committee of the Royal Hants County Hospital, Winchester, who a short time ago offered prizes for the best design for a new block for the nurses have awarded the first prize and premium to Mr. H. J. Weston, of Southampton. The estimated cost of the new building is £3,000. The block will comprise bicycle, linen, and cloak-rooms, a store, Sisters' bed sitting-rooms, drying-room, bath-rooms, etc.

The "Sanitas" Company, Limited, is preparing a new disinfectant "Okol," which has a guaranteed efficiency of 22, as compared with Carbolic Acid. The Company is justly renowned for the excellence of its preparations, the latest one therefore will be received with much interest.

Some Experiences in British Central Africa.

By A MISSIONARY NURSE.

During the last eight years I have been nursing on the shores of Lake Nyasa, the southernmost of the great chain of lakes which stretches right through the centre of Africa. Most of my patients have been natives, belonging to one of the Bantu races, generally called Nyasas.

It is by no means easy to start a practice among these natives. We in England are apt to believe that they are just longing for white doctors and nurses to come out there and heal them, and that they will flock to obtain treatment. But that was not by any means my experience. For the first few months after I arrived I only had about twenty patients all told, and none of them serious cases. There are native medicine men, who, so far as I have been able to discover, have nothing but a very rudimentary knowledge of herbs, which they gather and concoct into mixture with which they treat various diseases. A patient applies to a medicine man to cure him, taking with him a fowl, value 2d., by way of a fee. He receives either some medicine or a "charm," and awaits the result. If he gets better the medicine man claims a large reward, and the patient goes in fear of being bewitched, or of having a return of his disease, until he has paid up. If there is no improvement the matter is ended, and the patient composes himself to die, or if it be only a slight illness, to put up with it.

That anyone should settle down in their village with the sole object of doing them good free of charge, is a thing quite incomprehensible to them. Therefore, at the beginning, the general opinion was that for some ends of my own, probably evil ones, I wanted to get people into my power, and they were not inclined to sacrifice themselves.

But after a time, by dint of much patience, and by seizing every opportunity that came, I got to know a good many people, and was able to treat some successfully, and gradually the dispensary got a good name, and the practice grew. The natives of those parts suffer from most of the same diseases that one meets with in England, with a few typical tropical ones thrown in. It is astonishing how soon one learns to note that a man is anæmic in spite of his skin being black. Diagnosis is one of the greatest difficulties we encounter — there is only one doctor attached to the mission so that for the greater part of the time nurses have to do the best they can by the light of their own knowledge. A native has very little idea of giving a lucid account of his symptoms or of his history, and it requires a good knowledge of his language to understand exactly what is the matter. He will announce that he is ill in his heart, and have very little idea where that organ is situated, and then he will tell you how different parts of his body made extraordinary sounds of different kinds, so that one is forcibly reminded of a motor-omnibus on the point of breaking down.

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