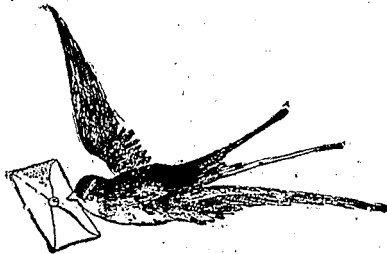


Our Foreign Letter.

Government Hospital, Mohales Hoek,
Basutoland, S.A.



MY DEAR EDITOR, — I have been here just a week, and we have already started taking in patients, and have had three opera-

tions. Considering the unpacking we have had, and the teaching of domestic and nursing matters we have to do, we find ourselves somewhat tired. There is one other Sister, and we work the hospital with native male and female nurse attendants, whose devotion to labour is not too great! The hospital is very pretty and well planned—two large wards, male and female; one isolation ward; and two small wards, to be kept for European patients. The situation is exquisite, the village or hoek behind us, and in front a huge vista of mountains, interlacing as far as the eye can travel, which is a great distance in this country.

The journey here from Maseru took us two days, and was most interesting; one thing that was very evident to me en route was the amount of field labour the native women did; the first thing in this respect noticed was the care of cornfields. To scare away the birds, a woman sits every day on a high mound of wet earth, and, having a long withy or cane in hand, sticks little pellets of mud on the end of it, then surely sends it at any offending bird with good result; she sits in a position to command the whole field. The next thing we passed was a huge patch of ground covered in a circle with corn, and on it, being chased round and round, were about twelve oxen, women beating them on to trample out all the corn. The next process was some women twirling Basuto pots, like washhand basins—the wind, as they twirled them, blowing out all the chaff from the corn—and singing in most perfect harmony a chant to beg the breezes to blow to help them. These scenes, with the most exquisite atmosphere and glorious landscape, are indelibly printed on my mind. The colours at this height—over 5,000 feet above sea level—are most wonderful; such a field of work for a painter's brush could not well be beaten.

I think I shall like work here, although, again, it will be all teaching, for we have, as I told you, to use native help and train them for work; but the native mind works rather like the "key pattern." You must stick to a straight idea or train of thought; once go out of the course you have mapped out for them you get to a full stop, and must begin all over again. You cannot quite preach to them, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," etc., but you must stick to the motto yourself. They can be unique in not seeing anything that

does not quite belong to their pattern of work, which is hardly a recommendation for good nursing. They can dispense medicines well, take temperatures, and do dressings, all in a very correct, methodical way; they are not very great at dusting or sweeping! I am very thankful to have this interest just now, for life in the future was looking very blank for me, owing, as you know, to the loss of my dear, life-long friend, whose letters from home came with every mail.

I am hoping I may time my next visit to Europe in 1912, and be with you at Cologne for the International Congress. If that tablecloth advertised in last mail's BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for £1 ls. has not been sold in aid of State Registration, please buy it in for me. I shall follow all your work, for up here I am as near you in work, through your Journal, or more so, than with other stations in Africa.

J. C. CHILD.

Practical Points.

Things worth remembering.

A small basin of strong ammonia placed in a room that has been fumigated with formaldehyde will soon remove all odour of the formaldehyde.

A large basin of water placed in the window where the wind will blow over will often lower the temperature of a room in summer; also a wet towel pinned to hang in an open window.—E.R.

If nausea is intense, mix a few bits of cracked ice with some orange juice, and it will not only prove most grateful to a parched tongue, but it will frequently lead the way to retaining more solid nutriment.—*Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast.*

Every nurse finds lifting hard, but if she will follow this suggestion she will find it easy. First, take a fall-out position, then, before lifting, bend the knees well, so that the lifting will be done by the legs, not by the back.—*American Journal of Nursing.*

The nurse who makes a specialty of obstetric cases or who is liable to have a considerable number of that class of cases will find a waterproof bath apron made of stockinet a wise expenditure. The material can be secured for a dollar or less, and it will pay for itself in time in the saving of laundry bills for white aprons. An apron of this kind is a gift to a young mother or nurse that is sure to be appreciated.—*Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette.*

Sterilising of utensils.

Miss Grace Baxter, R.N., writes to the *American Journal of Nursing* from the Ospedale Gesu à Marie, Naples, in reply to a correspondent who wishes to be told of a quick method of sterilising instruments: I am doing pioneer work in this Italian hospital and hardly dare to make a suggestion of any kind, but surely the Italian system of sterilising such utensils by burning spirits of wine in them is better than using bichloride of mercury, which corrodes. We move the burning alcohol about so as to reach every part of the utensil just before using, and it does not damage the articles in the least.

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