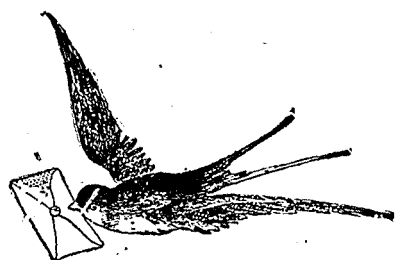


Our Foreign Letter.

THE LARGEST HOSPITAL IN THE WORLD.



Vienna is one of the most attractive cities in Europe, and the Austrians are the most charming of peoples. They combine the

vivacity of the Italian with the solidarity of the German, and 'tis an excellent mixture. The very name of this gay city summons to memory delicious strains of music, the waltz music of Strauss or Gungl, played as it only can be played in the city of its birth. And who that has ever tasted Austrian coffee but will wish to repeat the delightful experience? Go into any café in Vienna and ask for a *mélange*, and there is brought to you in a tumbler a most delectable mixture—pure coffee, with a thick layer of whipped cream at the top. This, for the modest sum of forty heller, or fourpence in English money. The bread, too, how good it is! Vienna bread, as we know it in London, is but a pale copy of the original.

This city possesses a splendid and probably unique group of modern public buildings. The Town Hall, Houses of Parliament, Court Museum, and Opera House, the Emperor's Palace, the Town Theatre, and that exquisite gem of modern architecture, with its twin lace-like spires, the Votive Church, are all situated in the same quarter of the town, which they render both imposing and beautiful.

But the Imperial and Royal General Hospital does not stand amongst these princely buildings, and, except as regards size, is not at all an imposing structure. It is built in nineteen quadrangles, and has a very monastic appearance, and naturally covers a great extent of ground.

The Hospital can make up 3,000 beds, and receives about 30,000 patients annually. There are 131 wards, varying much in size.

It is not of a venerable age, but was founded by Joseph II. towards the end of the eighteenth century. This Emperor only reigned ten years, from 1780 to 1790. He seems to have been a man of very good intentions. The following prayer, ascribed to him, has been preserved:—"Lord, Thou Who alone canst read my heart, knowest right well that every act of mine has been done with a view to my subjects' welfare." And he is said to have suggested as his own epitaph:—"Here lies a monarch whose intentions were of the purest kind, but who had the misfortune to see all his undertakings ruined."

Very possibly the Kaiserliche and Königliche Krankenhaus at Vienna suffered from the outset by haste in its foundation.

From the point of view of medical science, the institution is justly renowned. At the present time probably the greatest of living aurists has his clinique here.

But many other aspects have to be considered in the arrangements of a house for the sick, and certainly when I visited this hospital some few years ago the arrangement and organisation of the vast building left much to be desired. The wards we passed through had a desolate look, and were rather dark; indeed, there was a want of both light and air, nor did we think that the sanitation of the hospital was above suspicion.

It is a usual custom for young American doctors to finish their medical and surgical education in Europe, and many of them go to Vienna for that purpose. I well remember the indignant remarks made by one or two of these students as to the treatment of patients at this hospital. While they were full of admiration for the great skill and cleverness of the Viennese doctors, they considered that some of these practitioners betrayed a terrible lack of sympathy and tender care towards the sick under their control. "Brutal," I think, was the word one of these young Americans used in this connection.

Possibly some of the faults noticeable in this hospital are due to its unwieldy size. And probably there have been many changes for the better since I was there. It may even be that the trained nurse, as we in America and England understand the term, has found her way into this, the largest hospital in the world, and has already worked wonders in it.

RAY MERTON.

[Nursing in Austria still leaves much to be desired. The President of the International Council of Nurses has it in mind, and we hope to stir up interest at Cologne in 1912.—Ed.]

The History of the Rise of the Nursing Profession.

The only complete and authenticated history of the professional organisation of Nursing is to be found in the *Nursing Record*, and now the *British Journal of Nursing*. This file of forty-three volumes is now becoming exceedingly valuable from a historic standpoint, and every copy extant should be secured by Nursing Associations in this country.

Owing to the educational perspicuity of Miss Adelaide Nutting, there are to be found complete files of this *Journal* at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York City, and in the Library of the Nursing School attached to the Johns Hopkins Hospital at Baltimore, U.S.A.

By and bye other countries affiliated to the International Council—all of which should aim at possessing a Library of International Nursing Literature—will require them, and it is to be feared they will not be procurable. A reader of the *Journal* is prepared to sell bound volumes, 18 in all, from 1892 to 1900, inclusive. These volumes should be secured in the hope of obtaining those published from 1888 from another source. The Editor will be pleased to hear from any Association of Nurses desirous of securing them.

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