

NURSING IN GERMANY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I read with much interest the letter of Mr. McAdam Eccles, which you published in a recent issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING. As an Englishwoman trained in a British University Hospital, and having worked for a year in a State Hospital in Berlin, I thought a nurse's point of view might be interesting.

To begin with, he points out that on account of the German Insurance Act any person insured has a right to admittance. Further on he compares the number of nurses in a German State Hospital, for a certain number of patients, to the number of nurses to the same number of patients at St. Bartholomew's, forgetting that at St. Bartholomew's only acute cases or accidents will be taken in, while in the German State Hospital "any person" insured may be taken into the general wards, the "any persons" often being well enough to attend to themselves to some extent. Also he doubtless forgets the large number of (wärtter and wärterin) attendants, who, under supervision, can do very good work, very little being done for the male patients by the nurses.

Then "a veritable parsimony in the working of the hospital; nothing but bare necessities anywhere, no flowers, no chairs in the wards."

Truly the wards may have a bare appearance to an outsider, but really they were comfortable, light, airy and clean, and easy to keep clean. In every long ward there were two tables filled with plants, cared for by the hospital gardeners, and flowers when the patients' friends brought them, as there are in any hospital. In the grounds—which are far larger than those of any British hospital—flowers, plants and trees grow in plenty, and are well kept.

As to chairs, I can testify to washing one beside each bed every morning, and several others in different parts of the ward. (Dry dusting is unknown in the wards.) Besides a perfect luxury of appliances and conveniences for the benefit of the patients, and for the working of the hospital, the arrangements which made it possible to keep everything clean and disinfected were splendid.

The same in the nurses' quarters; large airy rooms, large furniture, all of the same colour and pattern, but everything necessary, to a comfortable chair, a writing table, an electric hand-lamp, beside the electric lamp in the middle of the room; every room having its own steam-heating apparatus, which could be turned on and off as convenient.

Flowers and plants are cheap and plentiful in Berlin, and rooms are easily made pretty.

As to the lack of care after an operation, I did not work in a surgical ward, but in the eye-wards, where I spent several months, the patients had every possible care after an operation, at all times day and night.

That there is much that might be improved in the nursing work, anyone who has had any

experience will agree, but there are some points on which we might take a lesson from the German nurses, and it is improving very much and quickly.

The long hours from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., with one hour free time apart from meals, are far too much.

The night duty was the worst, when one nurse may have charge of 50 patients, in a pavilion, at one end of which it is impossible to know what is going on at the other. The nurse usually has to sleep in the same bedroom as she would if she were on day duty, often over or nearly over the ward kitchen, with all the noise and clatter going on just under her window. All food was brought to the wards in metal cans and pails, and all patients and porters wore "wooden shoon" (wooden pantoffeln), all the paths in the grounds were asphalted.

As to "the lack of the milk of human kindness," as a stranger I received a generous supply of that comfortable fluid, and am quite sure the patients had no less.

Yours faithfully,
X. Y. Z.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Prize Competitor, London.—We make it a rule to publish the name and address in full of all winners of prizes offered in this journal, because to suppress them lays the management of a journal open to suspicion. It should be made illegal to offer prizes in cash or kind unless the names of the recipients are published. Your suspicions are just what we decline to submit to.

Grateful.—The Home of Rest at Brighton has been closed for some years. We are sorry that we cannot give you another address there.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS FOR MARCH.

March 2nd.—What are the fundamental principles underlying the practice of modern midwifery and maternity nursing? How would you apply them when summoned to a case?

March 9th.—What qualities do you consider specially important in a nurse who has charge of sick children, and why?

March 16th.—Describe what personal precautions you would take before passing on to another case after attending a case of infectious disease as a private nurse.

March 23rd.—Mention any indications which would lead you to suppose that an infant was not in normal health.

March 30th.—What special points would you observe in nursing a case of tuberculosis in a poor home?

NOTICE.

If unable to procure THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING through a newsagent, the manager desires to be informed of the fact. Copies can always be procured through Messrs. Smith & Co. and at the office, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

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