

## LADY MINTO'S INDIAN NURSING ASSOCIATION.

### AN INTERVIEW WITH MISS RUTH E. DARBYSHIRE, R.R.C.

The appointment of Miss Darbyshire, Matron of St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, as Chief Lady Superintendent of Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association, caused some surprise in the nursing world. So might we feel surprise if an English Bishop resigned his office as a dignitary of the English Church, the calm atmosphere of his cathedral city, and the even and well-ordered life of his episcopal palace, for that of an Indian or Colonial Bishopric. But an interview with Miss Darbyshire quickly throws light on the mystery. "You see, I lived in Australia from the time I was seven years old until I came to train at St. Thomas' Hospital, so it does not seem so much of an undertaking to me to pack my boxes and start for the other side of the world as it would do to many people. Then I have always regretted that I have not seen India, and am greatly looking forward to doing so, and, of course, the work of Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association is Imperial, and after the war we hope it will be extended."

Miss Darbyshire, who is Principal Matron of the Second London General Hospital (T.F.) at the St. Mark's College, Chelsea, has come into contact there with Lady Minto, who takes a keen interest in the hospital. She is impressed by Lady Minto's organizing capacity and business grip.

It is just ten years ago since Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association was formed, to provide trained nurses for the European community in India, and during the whole of that time Mrs. Davies, who, like Miss Darbyshire, was trained at St. Thomas' Hospital, has acted

as Chief Lady Superintendent. The Headquarters of the Association are those of the Viceregal Party, six months at Calcutta—now probably at Delhi, since the seat of government has been removed there—and six months at Simla. As one glanced out of the window of the Matron's Office at St. Mary's overlooking Praed Street, the view limited by the shops on the opposite side, there arose before our mental vision the rose-red walls of that historic city, its famous Ridge, under the vault of blue, and the picturesque life of its people, and again the beauty and grandeur of the snow-capped Himalayas, and one could not wonder—setting

aside the interest of the professional work to which Miss Darbyshire is going—at the call of the East to one whose girlhood was spent in the wide open spaces of Australia.

The lure of the East seems an idle tale to those who have never been "East of Suez," but those who have know well that its insistent call is one which remains to life's end.

In addition to her training at St. Thomas' Hospital, Miss Darbyshire had previous training in Australia, including midwifery experience, which she expects will now be an advantage to her. She speaks also of her work as Sister-in-Charge of the Infectious Block at St. Thomas' Hospital, and in organizing the

private nursing staff at the Royal Infirmary, Derby, during her term of office as Matron there, as likely to be helpful experiences in her new appointment.

Amongst her regrets at leaving St. Mary's she mentions two improvements which she had hoped to see carried out—the establishment of a Preliminary Training School, and the granting of two days' consecutive leave each month to the members of the nursing staff. The establishment of the Preliminary School had, in fact, been decided upon, but it would have entailed building, and, like many other things, the war



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