

DISCUSSION.

Discussion of the Report of the Infirmary Visiting Committee then took place, which was so interesting from a nursing point of view that we shall deal with it in our next issue. At its conclusion, this Report was adopted by 13 votes to 6, including the Clause that the Committee cannot find any justification in the statements that "The nursing in some of the wards is unsatisfactory and supports the idea that many of the nurses think of little else but time off-duty and money, and that they come on duty tired and jaded after late hours and constant excitement."

We reserve our own summary and comments.

THE NATION'S FUND FOR NURSES.

We have received the very belated Report of the Nation's Fund for Nurses (included in the British Women's Hospital Report). The audited accounts will require the careful consideration of the public and the Nursing Profession, and we will discuss them at length next week.

OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

(Continued from page 96.)

FOUR FLORENTINE HOSPITALS.

.. II.

THE HOSPITAL OF SANTA MARIA NUOVA.

This building is of great historic interest. It is the oldest and largest hospital in Florence. It is on record that Monna Tessa, a maidservant to Folco Portinari, who was the father of Dante's Beatrice, persuaded her master to build a hospital for the sick poor of the city. This was in the year 1288. It is evident that the original building was of small dimensions, and inadequate to the requirements, for we read that it was three times enlarged, namely, in 1315, in 1334, and again in the sixteenth century. At the present time it is capable of accommodating over 2,000 patients. Italy can boast of many men distinguished in medicine and surgery, among them three famous surgeons may be mentioned in connection with this hospital at the present time, namely, Dr. Stori, Dr. Machètti, and Dr. Burchi. Dr. Taddei very courteously showed us over the building, or rather a considerable portion of it (a whole day would have been scarcely too much time to see it all!)

It is said that the aim of the Italian builders to "express light and space is a priceless inheritance from the Romans." There is ample evidence of it in their beautiful cathedrals, churches and other great buildings. Here, too, in this hospital the same aim is noticeable in the large, lofty wards and corridors; but hospital construction was probably not understood in those days, and it would be unreasonable to expect all modern requirements to be satisfied in so venerable a building. It appears to be common law in Italy that no colour shall obtrude itself into hospital wards, for here again, and in all the hospitals I visited, both here and in Siena, it was entirely absent. Certainly white gives a charmingly clean appearance.

It is the custom in the Santa Maria Nuova Hospital for male nurses to nurse the men; female nurses are only employed for the women. The training is for two years.

There are three classes of patients, and the charges are made according to the classification. First class, lire 38. Second class, lire 25, and Third class, lire 18. (The value of a lira before the war was 10d., it is now very much less.)

I must not forget to mention that this hospital is provided with valuable physiological and pathological laboratories, also a library containing about 9,000 volumes. The days of this ancient hospital are numbered. A new and up-to-date hospital has been built, beautifully situated at the foot of Fiesole hills, an ideal spot.

III.

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OR OSPEDALE MEYER.

The contrast between this hospital and the one first described is just the contrast between the *ancient* and the *modern*. Nurses who interest themselves in nursing activities in other countries, and those who, through their own National Councils are affiliated with the International Council of Nurses, will surely do so, will be glad to learn that this is the *first* and the *model* children's hospital in Italy. It was founded by a wealthy gentleman of the name of Meyer, in memory of his wife (or daughter) rather more than twenty years ago. It is well situated on the outskirts of the city, and stands alone on open ground. Dr. Comba presides over it; his assistant, Dr. Grazzini, most kindly and readily granted our request, and conducted us all over it. This fine hospital is built on the block system, and contains about 350 beds, but, if necessary, accommodation for 400 children can be provided. Light and space is everywhere noticeable. In fact it is just what a children's hospital ought to be. One specially attractive feature is the beautiful wide and lofty corridors, two of them form verandahs, with glass walls and plentifully adorned with plants—a splendid recreation ground for convalescent patients, a kind of winter garden. The hospital consisted, when founded, of one central building, other blocks have been subsequently added as the need arose. The blocks are used as isolation hospitals for different infectious diseases. There are, for instance, the Measles Block, the Whooping Cough Block, the Diphtheria Block, &c. The nurses of the infectious blocks never enter the main part of the building. A very favourite material for flooring in Italian hospitals seems to be what is called *Mattonelli*. I can best describe what it is *not!* It is not stone, it is not brick, or wood. The effect is excellent, it looks well, and is easily cleaned and disinfected, and would probably wear for ever. The hospital is equipped with laboratories and bacteriological departments. Needless to say that open-air treatment is one of the principles of this fine model hospital. The nurses train for three years, and are recruited from the General Hospital after two years' training there.

(To be concluded.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)