

STRAY THOUGHTS IN A HOSPITAL.

"Crito," said Socrates, with his last breath, "I owe a cock to Æsculapius:"

Or, as a Christianised Peri gave expression to the same sentiment in modern poetry: "Joy, joy for ever, my Task is done!"

The penal code of the Chinese, an ancient civilisation, is not so abrupt in its method as that of the ancient Greeks. There is to be seen, somewhere, a picture of "Death in the Cangué"—a bamboo cage, in which a man was hanged by the neck, with a life-preserving perch for the ball of his great toe, giving him the miserable and tantalising privilege of prolonging his own agony "à discretion," for as long a time as he could manage to stand on tiptoe.

Moreover his cage and he were set in the market place, in a crowd.

As to this, it may be urged, that nobody forced him to use his perch: or hindered him from keeping his eyes shut.

Byron says:

When Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead—
Oblivion may thy languid wine
Wave gently o'er my dying bed—
No band of weeping friends be there,
To wail or wish the coming blow, &c.

Like all the higher orders of animals, he preferred to meet IT, in solitude.

Presumably, at every *critical* moment of the *immeasurable* process of "agonising"—(as the French call it)—the uncontrollable impulse of humanity is to "hold on." At every lull in the storm, on the contrary, the rational prayer is that "it were well, it were done quickly." What bystander can estimate the duration of each of a man's "critical moments," in such a case, with or without *corporeal* anaesthetics?

So we have Æsculapius beneficent in hemlock to whom the cock, herald of *daylight*, is sacred: and Æsculapius, malignant—thunderstruck by Jove for obstructing the path of mortals to the Styx—to whom the *staff* coiled round by the *serpent* is the appropriate emblem.

NURSES AND THE WAR MEMORIAL CARILLON.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association, the *Australasian Nurses' Journal*, reports it was resolved that nurses and their friends should subscribe to a bell in the War Memorial Carillon at the University of Sydney to commemorate the work of the Australian Army Nursing Service at home and abroad during the Great War.

The Carillon, which will consist of 49 bells, was in the first instance intended as a memorial for University men only, but the idea appealed to the community generally on account of its beauty, its idealism and its lasting nature, so that it has now become a public movement. Already the bodies who will be commemorated by suitable inscription on individual bells are the A.I.F., the Red Cross, the 3rd Battalion, the engineers and signallers, the British Medical Association, to mention only a few. It seems right and proper that in such a memorial, which will remain intact for hundreds of years (for the carillons erected in France and Belgium in the Middle Ages still ring forth their beautiful music) the service which nurses were privileged to render should be commemorated.

The important waiter in the restaurant, standing behind the customer, who was leisurely reading the bill of fare, suggested as follows: "I have 'kidney sauté,' and 'liver à la casserole' to-day, sir." The customer impatiently replied: "Don't tell me your troubles, but bring me something to eat."—*The Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing*.

NURSES' MISSIONARY LEAGUE.

The annual meetings of the Nurses' Missionary League, held on May 11th, were attended by a large number of nurses representing many hospitals, many countries and many varied spheres of work. At the morning session, a suggestive talk on Bible Study by Miss Polkinhorn was followed by reports, given personally by members, or read, from the N.M.L. branches in Guy's Hospital; Prince of Wales' Hospital, Tottenham; University College Hospital; King's College Hospital; Royal Infirmary, Bristol; Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and Fir Vale Infirmary, Sheffield. These reports showed real keenness and a large variety of activities in the branches and growth in the links between members now in hospital, and those serving overseas. An address on "Prayer, the vital necessity," was given by Miss Gaze (Addenbrooke's Hospital) who spoke from experience at Bannu, N.W.F. India, of the impossible tasks which confront a missionary nurse, but how the impossible becomes possible through the power of prayer.

Nurses who were present in the afternoon had the opportunity of listening to some beautiful music, and of seeing Miss Gaze's photographs and talking to her and several other members on furlough about work overseas. An address was given by Miss Pell, who vividly described the influence and the needs of women in India.

At the evening meeting the chair was taken by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Kingston, who was welcomed as the new President of the League. The annual report was presented by Miss Richardson, who drew attention to the encouraging accounts of hospital branches, and mentioned that 25 members had sailed for service overseas during the year, and that out of a total of 464 nurses working under British Missionary Societies 297 are members of the League. The Chairman then welcomed Mrs. Underhill (formerly Mrs. Starr, of Peshawar, N.W.F. India), and briefly referred to her rescue of Miss Ellis. Mrs. Underhill gave a vivid account of conditions and work in Peshawar, where her work had been to be everything from matron to pro, and sometimes doctor, anaesthetist and dispenser as well. The patients were wild tribesmen who often came from many hundreds of miles across the Border. They got a great many eye-cases and a great deal of big surgical work, some of the worst cases often being the results of native "treatment." Also they had a great many bullet wounds, the result of the terrible blood-feuds which were constantly going on. Mrs. Underhill emphasised the tremendous influence of medical work on the Frontier, where healing is the only thing that is wanted, the only thing which the people will come to seek; and she told of the tragic shortage of workers, and the many openings waiting for nurses. "The Great Physician has no ears or hands or eyes but ours, and He waits for us to be willing to let Him take control."

The Bishop closed with an address on "Consecration," dwelling upon the wonder of the days in which we live, the new situation in India, China, the Moslem world, and the opportunities and the responsibilities which confront all followers of Jesus Christ to-day.

We are asked by the Matron of St. James' Hospital, Wandsworth, to say that the Nursing School Badge is now ready. Nurses trained at that hospital, who wish to apply for it, are asked to write to the Matron for particulars, giving the date of their certificate.

We are glad to learn that Miss Henrietta J. Hawkins, who for many years has done such excellent work on the Barnet Board of Guardians, has been returned, unopposed, for another term of office. An experienced nurse, a certified midwife, and a real humanitarian, she is the right woman in the right place.

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