

idea that nursing consisted of "smoothing the brow"; women who, as Florence Nightingale put it, "did not want to know facts, but wanted to be enthusiastic." But take them all round, they had no idea beyond sacrificing themselves to the patient and to the work. They did not bother much about the hours of work or the rates of pay. Consequently they were exploited, good and hard, by hospital authorities and others.

That day is past, as far as institutions are concerned, but its influence still remains among the general public and a prevalent idea seems to be, "Get your money's worth out of her." The old joke about the patient's friends who thought nurses were trained to do without sleep, without rest, and with very little food, had a substratum of truth underlying it.

Nowadays a very different atmosphere exists. The old idea of nursing being a religious vocation has gone. It is a profession, and an honourable one, and the labourer is worthy of her hire.

The present-day young woman is not going to submit to extreme discipline, nor is she going to wear herself out, body and soul, for insufficient pay. On the whole the change is all for the good. Perhaps in time nurses may even be paid sufficiently to enable them to lay aside enough for their old age!

THE WORK OF NURSES FOR LEPERS.

Trained nurses know well the tragedy and suffering in the lives of men, women, and little children afflicted with the awful disease of leprosy, and honour those of their number who endeavour to brighten their lives and alleviate the suffering they endure.

The following extracts from the August issues of the magazines published by the Universities Mission to Central Africa give a glimpse of what is being done for lepers by members of the staff of that heroic mission.

Mr. H. B. Cooper, who explains that he has been "wandering in Central Africa simply as a private adventurer," gives in *Central Africa* a glimpse of the work of one nurse in Nyasaland:—

"She is young (I was rash and impertinent enough secretly to guess her age at about twenty-four or twenty-five) and a particularly bright and healthy-looking English girl—a very fortunate circumstance, considering the kind of work she undertakes. At first I had supposed that her duties only lay in the one station in which I first met her, but to my surprise I found her, at 6 a.m. on the day I was leaving, a fellow-passenger on the *Charles Janson*, which was proceeding to the south end of the lake. The explanation was that she was seizing the special chance of going by the steamer instead of by a native 'dug-out' canoe (her usual means of transport) to attend to her patients on 'leper island'—an hour or so down the lake. A further special piece of good luck for her on this occasion was the presence of Dr. Wigan, paying one of the rather rare visits which the huge area of his 'practice' allows him, to inspect and give advice about the patients. We all three landed on the island together, and the inspection took about an hour—after which Dr. Wigan and I returned to the steamer, leaving 'Miss H.' alone amid the lepers, looking perfectly happy (you might have thought she had come as one of a pleasant bathing or picnicking

party!) and utterly unconscious of being the heroine that she truly is.

"We left her on the island (with only her African dispensing 'boy' to help her), to carry through a long day's work for the poor victims of this most distressful and distressing malady, and then in the evening to be picked up by a canoe, of the type mentioned above, and paddled back, through waters that are often dangerously rough, to her station. As we waved our 'good-byes' to her from the steamer, I felt—together with a lump in my throat—a thrill of pride, such as I have seldom felt before, at the thought that she was my own fellow-countrywoman, and doubtless (I hasten to add) but one of not a few members both of this and other missions who attain—in one way or another—to similar heights of living."

The second incident, related in *African Tidings* by Miss Winifred Oborn, who joined the Mission this year, has for its location not an island on Lake Nyasa, but one not far from Pemba, on the east coast of Africa. She writes:—

"Funzi is an emerald island, fringed with tall palm trees, with branches rustling in the sea breezes, and surrounded by blue sea so clear that one can see every shell, pebble and starfish on the white coral sand below. The sky is a dazzling blue with billowy white clouds here and there, and the sails away in the distance look as though they are part of the sky. A very small island this, and beautiful, but in the thatched huts away on the hill there are almost one hundred lepers.

"To-day is Monday, and a steamer is bringing their stores and their medicine, and better than all the white 'Bibi' who loves them and is making life more bearable for them. To-day I am there, too, a new Bibi, and standing by I watch their poor disfigured faces light up at her approach, and the hope which they catch from her causes even the most pathetic of them to smile.

"Some cannot walk, they are confined always in a small mud hut, where rats bite them sometimes, so little power of movement have they. Some cannot take their stores, they have no hands, some cannot see, many have lost all their fingers and toes. One happy, laughing girl of about ten years, is already becoming hideous, for the disease has attacked her face so its beauty is marred, and we are saddened. How *much* work there is to be done, how many more of our friends would help us if only they knew—if only they could see; please remember the lepers in your prayers.

"But the lepers are waiting for their stores. A few onions for one, some fish for another, a box of matches here, and a woman's shiti there.

"Then their wounds are bathed and dressed and medicine is given, and away we go in the steamer, but their Bibi is left behind, she will swim out to her canoe later, and will paddle across to her small house just in time for sundown."

The great Bishop Steere was wont to advise newcomers to the Mission to write home as much as possible during their first year, believing that their impressions would never be so clear cut later, when the matters which they recorded had become a commonplace of their everyday life. The Bishop was wise as well as great, and we think this latest instance demonstrates it.

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