

NURSING IN NYASALAND.

When highly trained Sisters and Nurses go out to the Mission Field, some at home are inclined to ask with critics of old, "To what purpose was this waste?" Let any such procure and read "Nursing in Nyasaland," by Miss Alice Simpkin, S.R.N., formerly Sister Hope at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and published by the Universities Mission to Central Africa, 9, Dartmouth Street, Westminster, S.W.1, price 6d.

The book has a preface by Dr. Paget, Bishop of Chester, son of Sir James Paget, one of the most distinguished surgeons of the many St. Bartholomew's Hospital is proud to claim. He writes:—"How well the book is written! The very scenes, as one reads it, seem before our eyes. A wise and watchful sympathy, not without its touch of humour, makes the whole matter real to us. Every page of it helps us to understand how medical men and medical women full of scientific ardour, and fuller yet of the love of Christ, find the happiness of an almost perfect life in offering to such a place as Nyasaland the very best to which the sciences of art and surgery have attained.

"The stories in the book are some of the very best and most moving that I have ever read. The authoress most wisely has spoken mainly from the point of view of a true trained nurse, face to face with the sorrowful necessities of untended pain; yet who can doubt the deeper significance, the spiritual importance, of such work. I know no other work that could reveal more wonderfully the fulness of Christ, Divine Healer of the bodies and the souls of men."

We are always impressed by the advantage the nurse has in one respect over the teachers in missionary work and Miss Simpkin writes:—

"Bantu languages are rather more difficult to pronounce than continental ones, and in the Mission field there is less time for study and less chance of a good native teacher. I have heard it said that 'So-and-so makes four mistakes in pronouncing the word "nyimbo!"'; but the language of the Good Samaritan needs no interpreter and indeed helps to make plain our feeble utterances.

"The astounding cures worked by the new injections, or the restoration to sight of a patient suffering from cataract, are even to the looker on from a distance an obvious miracle, but what must they be to the sufferer? Imagine the power of the Gospel when preached to patients by the person who has saved them from a life of misery or dependence on grudging relatives. The bodily help is a guarantee of the reality of the spiritual blessing offered."

Amongst the cases dealt with in the outpatient depart-

ment of the Hospital on the Island of Likoma, on Lake Nyasa, where Miss Simpkin is at work, are the epileptic, badly burnt, and fractured limbs are more common than one would expect, phthisis, unknown little more than a generation ago, for which Europeans are responsible, "venereal disease has increased of late years, of the tropical diseases, ankylostomiasis is perhaps the greatest scourge; it claims hundreds of Africans every year. The little hookworm slowly saps the strength of its victims and the onset of the disease is insidious, therefore, often, the patient does not realise the gravity of it until it is far advanced. Yaws is a very common disease and is responsible for many lifelong ulcers that will not heal. The tropical fevers cause much suffering which is patiently and philosophically borne by the Africans. Enteric fever is slightly on the increase and

dysentery is always about. Bilharzia is all too common and cases of leprosy hitherto unknown to the medical department are often found among the out-patients. The children have all the usual children's complaints; many of them die of bronchopneumonia, there are epidemics of whooping-cough and measles, and teeth and eyes are just as subject to troubles as they are at home, the latter more so in the land where there is no sanitary arrangements and flies are such a plague.

"There is a group of patients not to be met with in England who present themselves as out-patients and are, for the most part, admitted to the hospitals. Men, women and children are continually being mauled by wild beasts. Lions, leopards, hyenas, crocodiles, take a heavy toll of lives of Africans; occasionally they are injured by buffaloes and elephants."

THE NEED FOR LEGAL STATUS.

So far there is no Imperial Act for the Registration of Nurses in India. Registration is in force in some of the Provinces, the most recent Act to be passed is in Madras, where a Council is being formed to draw up the regulations.

Efficient State Registration in South Africa has been obstructed for years, very much on the same lines as it was obstructed at home. But it is good news that at last that instead of being included in a Medical Act, the South African Trained Nurses' Association is going to press for a separate Nurses' Bill. Both the Minister and Secretary of Public Health have expressed themselves as unwilling to consider such a Bill at present, but if our colleagues in South Africa follow the policy of the State Registrationists at home, and peg away in season and out of season, with persistence and a nimble wit, they will win their right to protect the public and themselves from the nefarious practices of the bogus nurse, who now in her ignorance does such an infinity of harm amidst the community.



Photo]

[U.M.C.A.]

THE BABY TAKES HIS MEDICINE.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)