

Near the altar was a lady in white with a very smart hat of ruched ribbon. On closer inspection she turned out to be a nun of an order which wears a cap of ruched ribbon. She was young and pretty and among the crowd of "poor relations" she was certainly the smartest woman.

Still unchallenged I wandered into the ward on the right. The vast size and height of the wards and the crowd walking about gave an unpleasant feeling of publicity, but I noted that the beds were well spaced and the whole place airy and spotlessly clean. The fourth ward, that behind the altar, was empty and from the far end of it led a staircase marked "To the nurses' quarters." Still driven by insatiable curiosity I mounted this stair and found myself on a landing before a locked door. A peep through the crack showed a very bare dormitory of which I was able to see a good deal more after I had found a way out on to the portico-balcony and had been able to see through the windows. Twelve beds in two rows, some hard chairs, few cupboards and no comforts of any kind.

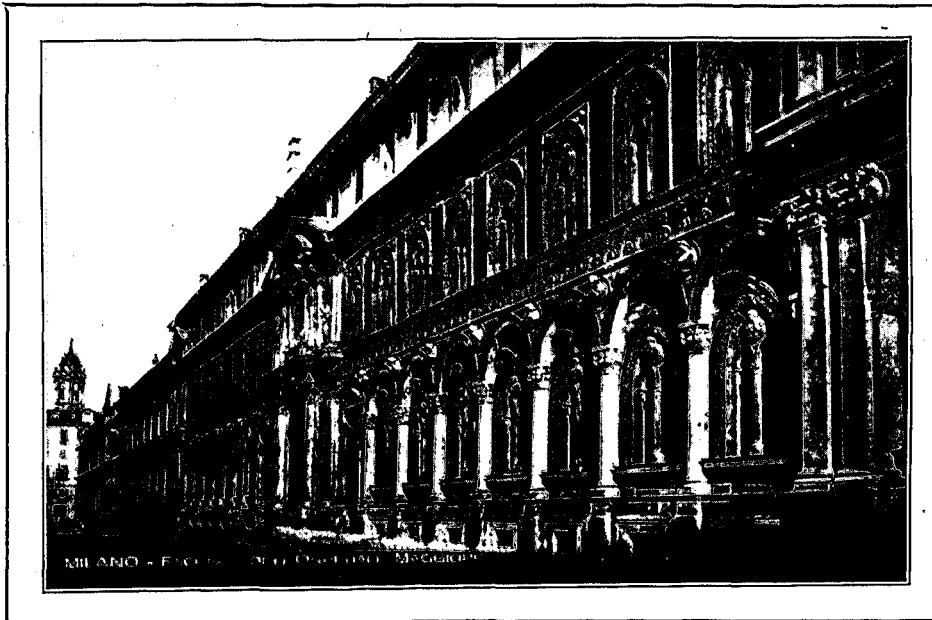
Returning the way I had come I found a ward-man and three nurses on duty at the entrance. Taking my courage in both hands I asked the nurses if they would step out into the sunshine to be photographed. Terrified they replied that they would certainly lose their jobs if they did, because they were on duty. Would they ask leave, or might I ask leave for them? And, if so, from whom? They indicated the smart little sister in the black cap, of whom they seemed in real dread, but she inopportunately disappeared through a door and I dared not run after her. The ward-man, however, came to the rescue. "The lady isn't asking you to go to a photographer in the town. She has got her camera with her, that thing under her arm." "Oh, that's different," they murmured, "but suppose anyone sees?" "Go into the small court, no one will worry you there and I'll stand guard here." The competent man pushed us all off and I got the three of them in the various stages of uniform. They all wear darkish blue cotton gowns and white overalls and the three variations are: (1) Blue gown and white sleeveless overall; (2) Blue gown almost entirely hidden by white-sleeved overall; (3) As two but plus a cap.

In the short time at our disposal I asked whether they were diploma nurses, that is, fully trained, and the eldest of them observed bitterly, "I suppose so. Anyhow, after thirty years of nursing, they made me sit on a bench and take an examination. I, what did I want with a diploma?" "But you got it?" I enquired, wondering how I should feel if I had to face a modern examination. "I suppose so," she answered, indifferently.

Frankly, none of these three nurses could by any stretch of imagination be said to be of the educated class. But the Italian Red Cross, which arranges these matters, is making an effort to raise the standard of nursing and to demand a "diploma" of its employees. Perhaps those with long experience were not asked much in the way of book-work before being given the necessary certificate. I do not know what standard is set, but I know some good-class modern Italian girls, and I do not believe that those who could take a high standard of bookwork would inhabit that dormitory!

The pharmacy, just inside the main entrance, was now very busy. Bottles were being handed out over the counter and placed on barrows similar to those used for stores, only smaller. These were pushed into the various wards by men-servants. Now that the wards were all open (I entered a vast number of them without any question from anyone) I discovered that the small, quiet courts were allotted to wards for specific ills, but it was not till later that I learned that the administration of the hospital had

under its direction a number of small modern, specialised hospitals where the most up-to-date treatments of all kinds are available. Though electricity, central heating and running water have been installed at the Ospedale Maggiore, it was considered wiser to have more complicated installations in modern buildings.



MAIN FRONT, THE OSPEDALE MAGGIORE, MILAN.

OUTPOST NURSING.

From Rencontre West, Hermitage Bay, as a member of the Newfoundland Outpost Nursing and Industrial Association, Miss E. W. Winnall, writes:—"I am having many and varied experiences both in nursing and other ways. The people call in the nurse for everything, and as there is no doctor within many, many miles, there are some quite worrying problems to be faced sometimes, but one can only do one's best, and be ready for any emergency. The ignorance of people and their appalling superstitions in these advanced days is hard to understand, but when you see children growing up still unable to read or write it is not so surprising, as everything goes round by word of mouth, and is often very much changed in the transit. I am always very interested in the JOURNAL, as it helps me to keep in touch with nursing progress elsewhere, and I file the very helpful nursing articles for reference, so as to keep up to date forms of treatment. The N.O.N.I.A. Committee at St. John's was very interested in your publication of my letter to you. Our Association is quite separate from the Grenfell Association, concerning which you have published information." The Editor is always deeply interested in Outpost Nursing, especially by British Nurses.

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