

Theodoric the Great did likewise. Napoleon appointed a commission of Italian and French engineers to study the whole question, and from the end of the last century onward considerable efforts were made to redeem the land. But it was not till Ross established the connection between malaria and the anopheles mosquito that the problem could be faced in its complexity, as involving sanitary as well as engineering science, and it was not till the directing genius and energy of Signor Mussolini unified and co-ordinated and set in motion the necessary measures that the real work of redemption—or, as the word so happily coined has it, the "bonification"—of the Pontine Marshes began.

It has to be borne in mind that this vast enterprise is being carried out in defiance of malarial infections of exceptional virulence, and every move is conditioned by sanitary precautions, without which the necessary labour could not be obtained, or a population settled on the land.

The floating population engaged in this great work, which has given employment to so many thousands of ex-soldiers, is housed in comfortable movable barracks, each accommodating 2,000 men, with precautions, which are under the surveillance of the Red Cross, for the extermination of mosquitoes and the maintenance of sanitary conditions.

The health service throughout the region is under the direction of the Italian Red Cross. There is a Director-General in charge of six health stations, with a sufficient staff of doctors, nurses and disinfectors.

Among services rendered besides treatment of the sick in hospital or at home are:—

The systematic distribution of quinine for prevention and cure of malaria.

Supervision of food and water supplies.

Popular anti-malaria education of workers and colonists.

The destruction of larvæ and of fully developed mosquitoes.

The protection of dwellings by fine wire gauze.

The provision to all workers of a health card entitling them to treatment not only during the term of employment, but for six months afterwards.

The health services are gratuitous.

And what of the results? It is too early to reach a final conclusion. The great battle against an age-long enemy is not to be easily won, but all the indications are favourable.

Formerly there was practically no stable population in the marshes, and such residents as there were withdrew almost entirely during the malaria season: in 1933, in September, the worst month, there was a resident population of 42,459.

There is a very considerable diminution in the number of new cases of malaria—the acid test—and it is significant that there are far fewer new cases among the resident population than among the floating population of labourers, which is difficult to supervise.

And the productiveness of the newly-drained and cultivated land is going up by leaps and bounds. The latest report of cereal crops gives:—

1932: 871 quintals from 681 hectares of land;

1933: 34,742 quintals from 2,973 hectares.

Bonification indeed!

The nurses taking part in this campaign may well rejoice that they are privileged to help to promote this most beneficent work.

The retirement of Mrs. E. A. Watts, S.R.N., Hon. General Secretary and Treasurer of the Trained Nurses' Association of India, from this position, is an occasion for much regret, as Mrs. Watts has been untiring in her work for the Association and those in touch with this realise how much it is indebted to her.

QUEEN'S NURSES AT THE PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE.

The following interesting report of the inspection held by Her Majesty the Queen of Scottish Queen's Nurses, in the garden of the Palace of Holyroodhouse during Their Majesties' recent visit to Edinburgh, is published in the *Queen's Nurses Magazine*, just issued.

Four hundred and ninety-eight Nurses from Districts all over Scotland were able to attend. Others who would fain have done so were kept in their districts by pressure of work, but in many instances the Committee of the District Nursing Associations secured special help in order to free their Nurses for the occasion.

It was a "red-letter day" in the annals of the Scottish Branch of the Institute. The Nurses looked so smart in their trim uniform and shady hats. The weather was perfect. H.M. the Queen, who was wearing the gold Badge of the Institute of which she is the Patron, was met by Her Grace the Duchess of Richmond and Gordon, the Chairman of the Scottish Council, and by the Chairmen of the various Committees of the Council and the Office-bearers, who were presented in turn. Others presented included the Superintendent for Scotland, Miss Dewar, and the Officials of the Headquarters Staff, the Superintendents of the Central Training Homes in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the Branch Home and County Superintendents. Thereafter Her Majesty walked round the ranks of the Queen's Nurses, stopping occasionally to say a few words to Nurses wearing War Service medals or to make some enquiry as to the work in certain of the areas represented.

The following had the honour of receiving their Badges for Long Service at the hands of Her Majesty:—

Miss D. Cameron, Inspector of the Scottish Branch of the Institute.

Miss A. E. White, County Superintendent, Inverness-shire.

Mrs. Margaret Green, Queen's Nurse, Bo'ness.

Miss Mary Barnet, Queen's Nurse, Crieff.

Miss I. B. Pateson, Queen's Nurse, Cambuslang.

Later the Scottish Council entertained the Nurses to tea in the Music Hall, Edinburgh. The scene was an animated one, at which many happy reunions took place. Her Grace the Duchess of Richmond and Gordon and the Lady Susan Gilmour, the Chairman and Hon. Secretary of the Scottish Council respectively, were present for a short time and addressed the Nurses, informing them how very pleased Her Majesty had been with the large numbers that had come to greet her and with their smart and business-like appearance. After tea the Annual Meetings of the Queen's Nurses Home of Rest and of the Thrift Fund Society took place.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)