

IN THE GARDEN OF FRANCE.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL OF TOURS.

The old Roman city of Tours, the birthplace of Balzac, is rich and populous and lies in the centre of the "Garden of France"—the fertile province of Touraine. Situated where the Loire is joined by the Cher it is a convenient tourist centre for those who wish to visit the famous châteaux or to ride or drive through a land rich in vineyards and in the summer luxuriant in the green and white of leafy or blossoming trees. Tours itself is well worth a long day's visit with its lovely bridge and broad tree-bordered streets and historic twin-towered cathedral; and among the sights which a nurse should not fail to see is the Hospice Général—the great municipal hospital which lies quietly situated on the outskirts of the city.

One can best approach it by the quaint tramway that winds and cranks along the cobbled streets stopping at

place can be gathered from the fact that in the hospital section alone are 2,200 sick beds.

The hospital maintained by public funds and private donations is under municipal control. Its buildings differ greatly in their age. They have been continuously altered or added to since the original foundation in the reign of Louis XI. Almost the last of the original buildings is now being pulled down and in the empty space workmen are erecting a vast laundry to serve all the hospital's needs.

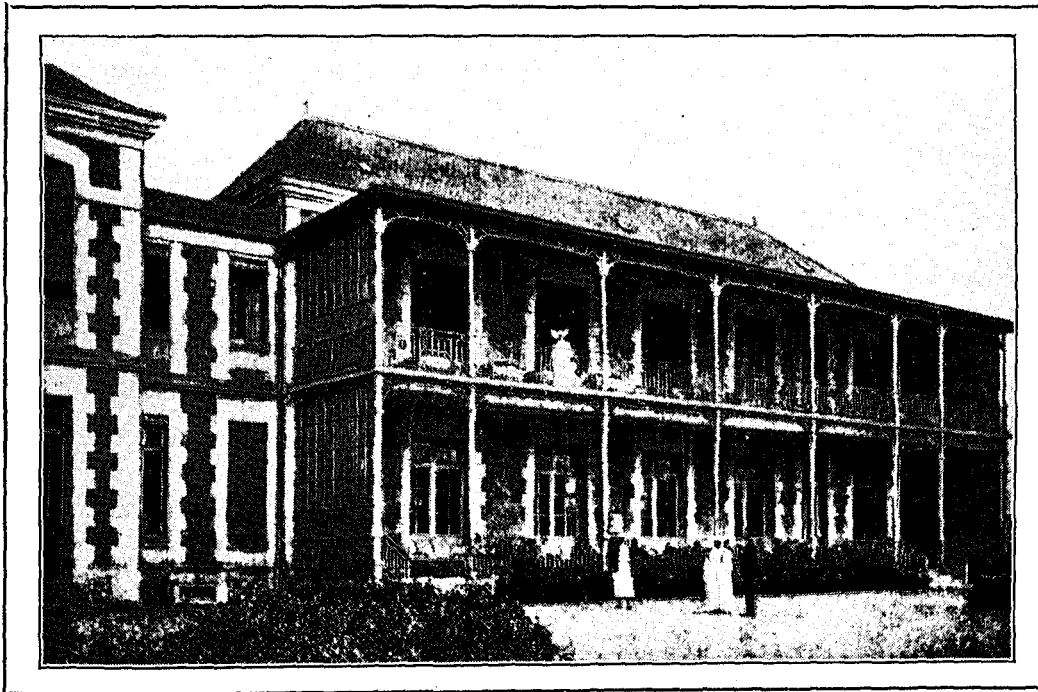
As is usual in France the nursing is for the most part done by *les religieuses*: in this case by the Sisters of the Order of Ste. Brétèche with their mother house at St. Cyr. Though they are required to take a State diploma it is not, one gathers, a stiff examination. With them it is the practical rather than the theoretical side of training which counts. The exception is the maternity hospital which is under expert lay control. The training to be a *sage-femme* lasts two years with an examination at the end of each year. Pupils begin their training at about nineteen and

work twelve hours a day with a week-end off a fortnight and an annual holiday of two weeks. They are not trained nurses and with few exceptions pay for their training by arrangement.

The head midwife holds the Port-Royal Diploma of Paris and is in charge of four trained midwives and twenty pupils. The wards and theatres and lecture rooms are new, hygienic and splendidly equipped. Perhaps the most novel feature in the home and in every way a highly commendable one is the provision of private wards for *les mères anonymes*, the mothers who do not wish for good reasons that their identity should be known. No one

demands their names; it is a sufficient passport that they are with child. When the child itself is born they can leave it behind if they wish. It will be fed, cared for and educated at the expense of the State. This humane system has had the beneficial results, deliberately intended, of reducing the crimes of abortion and infanticide. Actually, as one visits the *pouponniers*, though the babes there seem well nourished and cared for, there is something indescribably pathetic about the rows of cots and infants who will never know their mothers.

As modern as the maternity home and equally efficient, is the new tuberculosis block whose airy wards open on to a spacious sunlit garden. The cubicle system is followed, the six cubicles in each ward being arranged in lots of three back to back, making an E shaped formation on either side. Each cubicle contains two beds, and by an easy arrangement the patients can be wheeled on to a long verandah where they can benefit from the *cure d'air*. A separate and spotlessly clean kitchen provides meals of an elaborate and typically French character for these patients and by an ingenious arrangement the hall dividing



Tours—L'Hospice Général—Cure d'air, Côté femmes de l'Hôpital—Sanatorium.

last by the round arch and white façade of the hospital just opposite the botanical gardens. Here the town seems very far away; and peering through the central gate one catches a glimpse of a fountain and trees and of inmates sitting or sauntering in the checkered sunshine of an open courtyard. It is not until one has passed inside and begins to wander round its many blocks and quadrangles that one appreciates the huge size of this very old foundation. It is like entering a college and discovering oneself in a University.

Here in one large walled colony are assembled the municipal poorhouses for both men and women, the military hospital, the maternity hospital and up-to-date midwifery school, the children's hospital, the tuberculosis sanatorium and the big medical and surgical blocks for men and women. Here, too, complete in every way is a school of medicine and pharmacy where these subjects can be studied in all their branches; and within its walls are also to be found a large chapel, a *communauté* for the nuns, a bakehouse, butcher's store, mattress factory, and general canteen. Some idea of the sheer size of the

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