

Africa from 1923 to 1931, during which time the Princess took a warm interest in nursing affairs in the Union, so that she should be conversant with the conditions and needs in the Union in regard to nursing.

The arrival of *The Quarterly Bulletin* of the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service is ever a joy. It always thrills us afresh to find its members imbued with the spirit of service and of adventure, and the risks they so cheerfully encounter vividly described by Mrs. Mary Breckinridge, its gifted editor. Here are two cases in point:—

“Miss Janet Coleman, the nurse in charge of District No. 1 at Hyden, gives a graphic description of four midwifery calls in six days during one of the bad flood tides. She was called out on a Monday night and there was too much water for riding, as well as thunder, lightning, and rain, so she walked, with the father carrying her saddlebags over his shoulder. Except for a few encounters with landslides she managed pretty well and got her baby Tuesday morning. The next call came on a Thursday, in the early morning, and the next Friday evening. She got this last baby, Sophie Ann, at 4.15 Saturday morning. The next call came at 3.20 Sunday morning. She made this by walking to and over the swinging bridge (a sort of ‘Bridge of San Luis Rey’ affair, which rocks as you cross it above the roaring floods) and by riding the father’s mule about two and a-half miles to the house.

“Our lovely Guernsey Cow, ‘Nora Shoemaker II,’ has her third heifer calf, by Mr. Deaton’s Ayrshire bull that he was so kind as to loan our district for the season last summer. We named this wee heifer ‘Cherry.’

“Nora’s first daughter ‘Blinkie’ (the mountain name for sour milk, but ‘Blinkie’s’ milk is sweet and creamy), has been sent over as a gift to the nurses at the Belle Barrett Hughitt Center at Brutus, on Bullsken Creek, who badly needed a good cow with milk rich enough for them to make their own butter. Sending a cow to Brutus, however, is not as simple a thing as writing about it. ‘Blinkie’ was escorted by Mary Elizabeth Rogan and Mary Gordon and they planned three days to make the trip, spending one night at Hyden, one at the Possum Bend center at Confluence, one night at the Margaret Durbin Harper Memorial Center at Bowlington. As a matter of fact, a big tide caught them at Bowlington and girls and cow stayed there two or three days with Eva Gilbert. It was slow and difficult travel, leading a reluctant cow. As Mary Lib said, “‘Blinkie’ wasn’t accustomed to being led, but then neither are we accustomed to leading cows.’ After the first day, with experience on the part of both couriers and cow, the travel went along very well. ‘Blinkie’ was delivered at Brutus in prime condition to her grateful mistresses.”

*The Health Broadcaster* relates that during the recent Biennial of the organisations of American Nurses at Los Angeles, the United Air Lines conducted a “stewardess contest.” The nurse who best fulfilled the requirements of an airline stewardess graduate registered nurse, attractive personality (including both charm and poise) not over 120 lb. in weight, no taller than 5 ft. 5 in., not over 26 years of age—was to receive a round trip flight to New York, and a job as stewardess with the United Air Lines. Seventy-five nurses entered the contest. The winner was Helen B. Clark, of Tucson, Arizona. Seymore Felix, director of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, was the judge.

## THE OVERWORK OF NURSES.

It is always to be expected during August that the thoughts of editors and contributors to the correspondence columns in the press turn to the question of nurses’ hours, conditions of living, salaries, standard of training, and so on, as subjects provocative of discussion in the dull season.

This year *The Times* opened its columns to the subject and led off with a leading article on “the conditions in this country,” alleging (1) that nurses in some hospitals work during long hours with only short periods of rest, and that the physical strain imposed upon them can be imagined; (2) in addition they must attend lectures and prepare for examinations; and (3) that in the course of time overwork must prejudice success.

In discussing these points in relation to the charge of overwork, we must consider the type of young women who enter hospitals for training. It is quite certain that there are not sufficient applicants from the educated and cultured classes to supply the needs of the hospitals and, later, of the public. This is the first difficulty with which the nursing schools are confronted. They must fall back on those educated in the secondary schools. And here let us say that the standard of education, including the standard of the teachers who impart that education, falls much below that required in most Continental countries. Teachers as well as taught frequently come from homes where discipline is lacking and high principles are not enforced, with the result that such principles are not—cannot indeed be—instilled into the children in their charge. In spite of the millions of public money spent on education, many children pass through and out of our schools with minds uninformed, unable to spell or compose an ordinary letter, nor have they that sound knowledge of household management which is the basis of good nursing.

When young women so ill equipped enter our nurse training schools is it any wonder that they are bewildered and become overstrained by the practical and theoretical knowledge which it is necessary that they should acquire, in addition to the foundations of an ordered and disciplined life? We do not find this strain complained of in any degree in nursing schools in Scandinavia, where general education is on a higher plane.

The progress of scientific medicine during the present century has been phenomenal; for its practical application physicians and surgeons are largely dependent upon the knowledge, skill and resourcefulness of nurses.

And if they are to bring these gifts to the service of the sick and to the help of the medical profession, then they are entitled to receive the instruction which will enable them to understand the principles upon which the scientific and highly technical procedures which they are required to apply are founded. It is unworthy of any section of the medical profession which utilises their services—a diminishing section, we firmly believe—to grudge nurses this knowledge. Rather they should demand that it should be imparted to them.

In regard to complaints as to the housing and feeding of nurses in our hospitals, whether voluntary or municipal, we believe that the general standard is equal to that maintained in a proportion of the homes from which the probationers come, and that great efforts are being made by hospital managers to improve domestic arrangements and to provide more nutritious food.

Work in a ward of sick people makes appetite capricious, and the dieting of nurses needs very special care. Food supplied by contract is seldom of the best quality, and the greatest vigilance is necessary in keeping it up to standard.

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