

Nursing Echoes.

* * * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith.*

I ALWAYS read *The Nurses' Quarterly Journal* with great interest, and the literary excellence of the August number is worthy of all praise. The editorial, of course, deals with the Third Report of the Select Committee appointed by the House of Lords to inquire into the Management of Metropolitan Hospitals, and deals with the Nursing questions from a purely professional point of view.



THE paper entitled "Nursing in the Colonies," by Sister HENRIETTA, Matron of the Kimberley Hospital, South Africa, and read before the Royal British Nurses' Association, should be read by all Nurses desirous of emigrating to that quarter of the globe. Some excellent descriptions of South African Hospitals are given:—

"There is first, Capetown, with its many hospitals and institutions. Stately New Somerset, so handsome and cheerful, with its balconies seeming almost to overhang the blue waters of Table Bay, with every convenience and comfort, with electric light everywhere, with much of ornament and decoration, with thoroughly good administration and good work—any provincial town in England might be proud to possess it. But as you stand on the broad grass path between the hospital and the sea, on clear days you can see far away to your left what looks like the funnel of a steamer, but is really the tall lighthouse on Robben Island, the Isle of Lepers. Three times a week a small steamer takes out such persons as can get a pass from the Colonial Secretary to that home of hopeless sorrow. The little steamer anchors in the roadstead, and the boats come out to meet the visitors, who land on the flat sandy shore. The central chapel and the lighthouse stand on the highest part of the almost flat little desert island. The hospitals, asylums, and doctors' and officers' houses lie along the beach. The beautiful wards of the new Leper Hospital are slowly rising, block by block, about half a mile from the landing place, and I think I can safely say that that stretch of sand on a hot day with a hot wind blowing is the hottest walk in the world.

The Nurses, whoever they may be, who go there should have plenty of courage and plenty of hope. It is a touching thing that for years in the little shabby oratory of the old lazaret house the afflicted lepers have met together evening after evening by themselves, of their own accord, to pray that a remedy may be found for the dreadful scourge that so cruelly wounds them. Their limping feet have trodden the well-worn floor, sightless eyes have been raised to heaven, fingerless hands have been folded together day after day, year

after year, while the whole leper cry has gone up, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." It should be, it must be, echoed by every true-hearted Nurse who works there; and the greatest care, the closest observation, the most scrupulous obedience to orders should second the ceaseless efforts of the doctors there to find some remedy or some amelioration for this terrible disease. But how great must be the patience, and how firm the faith to work on day after day amidst scenes so dreadful, in such loneliness and isolation, coping with the dull depression and the irritable distorted minds of the lepers; with the mountains and towers of Capetown continually in sight and continually out of reach—with no 'good case' to cheer one's heart, with no 'convalescent patients' to comfort one's mind; the waves of the sea before one, 'waves of sand forlornly multiplied' behind. You may now and again in Europe see one or two lepers together, e.g., in Norway, but the full horror and despair can only be realized when you see hundreds of them together as on Robben Island. No English Nurse should think of leper work until she has tried and patiently endured for some years the dullest work, the greatest monotony, and the dirtiest patients that England can afford.

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The most interesting Hospital I have seen in Africa is the one still further up the coast, in Durban. The great heat necessitates the peculiar construction. It is quadrangular, with a deep cloister all round, both inside and outside, and a wide overhanging verandah to the upper story, the roof of the cloister making the balcony. It has the appearance of some of the large old convents in South Germany, and is beautifully cool as well as most picturesque. Durban is very much of a Moslem town, the streets being filled with Arabs, who mostly show by their dress that they are, or have been, pilgrims. There are many fine buildings in the town, which is built all round the curve and up the thickly-wooded hills of the large bay; yellow, white, and rose giant *abutilous* shade the pavements in the streets, palms wave, bamboos a hundred feet high fan the sultry air; Zulus carry huge branches of bananas like the grapes of Eschol between two of them; beautiful begonias with every leaf like a blossom grow everywhere. Sugar and tea and coffee plantations grow outside the town; fields of pine-apples and bananas grow higher up the hills; granadillas creep about and hang out their white flowers and purple fruit on every railing, fence, gateway, and bush. It is a wonderful scene of loveliness, but the Hospital is much needed for the typhoid fever so common in these tropical climates, and also for the numerous dock accidents, as well as for all the usual diseases of a large population."

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THE opinion of Sister HENRIETTA, the great pioneer of *professional* Nursing, the first woman in the world who has gained legal status for Nurses, must be of the utmost value to her colleagues all the world over. What she says of the type of Nurse best suited to the colonies is worthy of note:—

"One word more, of the kind Nurses who should come out to the colonies, the type of women most likely to be a success. It should never be forgotten that an entire change of the mode of life and of country and companions removes for a time all secondary motives. On the other hand, the English Nurse is exposed to sharp criticism in her new home, and here comes in the narrowness of my subject. The Nurse faithful, devoted, unselfish, healthy, straightforward, and honest-hearted, who would be a success in the colonies, would be a success anywhere. But to those who advise Nurses to go here or to stay at home I would say a word."

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