

## In a Cholera Hospital at Hamburg.

BY MISS ANNESLEY KENEALY.

A SHORT description of our journey hither, and the experiences we have so far met with, may be of interest to the readers of the *Nursing Record*. The circumstances of our coming were told in a previous number—how, stimulated by the reports of the Hamburg sufferers and the totally insufficient supply of Nurses, my sister and I telegraphed to the Director of the Eppendorfer Hospital, offering our services, and how he cordially accepted them.

We started by the 8 o'clock train from Victoria, had a fine passage across the German Ocean, reaching Flushing—that quaintest of dirty old-fashioned towns—at 4.30. We changed five times during the evening and night—there being, owing to the Cholera scare, no through trains—and waited four hours at one miserable little station in the early dawn, the rain falling dismally. From some infection caught here or in the train, I was unfortunately seized before I could reach Hamburg, with a sudden choleraic attack, and could go no farther than Osnabrück. After a few days, I was able to continue my journey and went on to Hamburg, whither my sister had preceded me.

We were given a most kind and cordial welcome at the Hospital, there being no vestige of that national jealousy with which it had been predicted we should be received. Doctors, Nurses, and Officials united to accord us a very pleased and pleasing hospitality. It is true our services were much needed, the regular staff being absolutely worn out by the tremendous rush of work, with which, indeed, they had been unable to fairly cope. It was not only that they were insufficient in numbers to the proportion of cases, but that cholera wards need certainly more than twice the usual ratio of Nurses to patients.

The Eppendorfer is really a magnificent institution. It is built in the pavilion system, each pavilion—of which there are some fifty—being separated from its neighbour by a garden space, and forming a ward containing from 12 to 20 beds. During the present epidemic, these numbers are greatly exceeded, the beds being crowded so closely together that only just enough room to pass between is left. The whole building is lighted by electricity, and the cold water taps are everywhere to hand, in fact, all the latest improvements extant are here utilised. The organisation differs somewhat from that of our hospitals at home. For example, there

is no Matron—the Nurses and the over-Nurses being superintended by an Inspector. The House-Physicians who do not seem to surround the lofty magnitude of their position with all that sensitive dignity we English-trained Nurses are accustomed to, take in many ways the place of Sister, and are not at all above explaining even to an insignificant “pro” the reason why she should do a particular thing. The Nurses wear no uniform, but don stuff gowns of a colour and material according to their taste. They do not wear caps, except, of course, those who belong to a religious sisterhood, several of whom have come to assist the nursing during this epidemic. Our St. Bartholomew caps are greatly admired, and we are proud to wear the badge of our Alma Mater. Nothing is said on the subject of fringes, as there used to be in dear old Smithfield. For the time being, indeed, we are a law unto ourselves, and wear very much what we please, and we are far too busy to care greatly as to how we are clad so long as we are neat and clean; this last condition, by-the-by, is not always easy. The nursing in the male wards is entirely in the hands of orderlies, these being superintended by an Inspector, and it has been in female wards especially, that the lack of sufficient Nurses has been felt. It is depressing to see one's patients die off so quickly, or if they live even, recovery is so rapid that one has scarcely time to know them ere they leave to make room for another stricken one. One sees almost whole families die off, one taking another's place, sometimes even the same bed that has been vacated by the death of mother or sister. Cholera seems to be, like typhus, a disease of the dirty and ill-fed, and those who have been in the habit of drinking stand but little chance of recovery.

One could not possibly forget, when once seen, a typical cholera case. There is nothing like it. The face is pinched and wan and of a peculiar blackish colour, the limbs are shrunken and shrivelled, the eyes are dull and sunken. There is more or less constant purging, the agonising pain and rice-water stools being most characteristic. Vomiting is, in many cases, even more distressing than diarrhoea, and there is a ravenous thirst. In a later stage the limbs are so cramped that when rubbed one feels the muscles contracted into hard, stiff knots. Very remarkable, too, is the dull, heavy apathy of the patients. They seem perfectly indifferent to their surroundings and often oblivious of their pain. The thirst is so intense that they clutch, and will by no means let go, the cup until the whole of its contents have been taken. The disease is peculiarly fatal to infants and old people,

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)