

might be opened. And yet, while we longed, in one sense, to set to work to re-fashion the existing system and bring help and hope where it is so sadly needed, we know that the office of tending the lepers would be a terrible one, and would need more self-abnegation and self-suppression than most of us are able to give. Work among lepers must ever be the most God-like because it is the most repugnant task that anyone can be called upon to perform.

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WHILE inspecting the workshops, a man—a hopeless leper—was introduced to us as the only one among them who could speak with us in English, he having been for seven years in New York before he fell a victim to his disease. Poor fellow! He felt so proud and distinguished at being able to talk to “the ladies,” which he did in true Yankee style, with a terrible twang, and a curious lavishness of slang phrases which he used with the utmost gravity and a perfect unconsciousness of anything remarkable in his expressions.

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IN the other Leper Hospital there are no wards in one sense of the word. We were shown into a large square corridor with doors on every side opening into what looked like so many cabins aboard ship. Each patient has a cabin to himself, a bunk, a window (which in no case was open), a small chair and table. The arrangement is most unhealthy, but it is easy to imagine that its absolute privacy might be very acceptable. The patient can shut himself up in his cubicle of a few yards square, and be absolute monarch of all he surveys. But the instinct for sociability seems to be a very strong one in all humanity, and we noticed that nearly all who could manage to crawl from their cabins, had come out to sit and smoke with their fellows. There is one big Norwegian in charge, and under his supervision the inmates do their own work. Each is allowed a small daily sum for food, etc., and this, the healthier or non-contagious ones, are permitted to spend for themselves and the others in the town. It caused quite a commotion in the community when, during our visit, a number of these more fortunate among their brethren returned from the daily marketing, and produced from the basket on their arms the very poor luxuries the small sum at their disposal would allow.

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UNTIL quite recently it was customary among the Norwegians for healthy men and women to marry lepers, with an utter disregard to the consequences to themselves and possible children. But now, thanks to better hygienic knowledge, coupled with a wholesome dread of the horrible disease, it is very difficult for a leper to obtain a mate amongst the healthy. There was, in one of the Hospitals

we visited, a man who had concealed the fact of his leprosy, and had married a healthy young country girl. He would not, of course, be allowed to return to her, and it was hoped she had escaped the disease. Opinion is divided as to whether or not leprosy is hereditary; but, whatsoever may be said on the subject, it must be conceded that lepers are not suitable persons to become parents. In the East this is still permitted, a circumstance disgraceful to any community in whose hands jurisdiction lies. The connection between fish-eating and leprosy, which has so often been insisted upon, has been absolutely disproved, in Norway, by the prevalence of the disease in a district where fish is practically unknown as a diet.

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ALTHOUGH there is much to be desired in these Norwegian Leper Hospitals, one cannot help recognising that the patients in them are living in luxury compared with the conditions of their lives at home. They have good food and fair clothing, and their surroundings are infinitely better than anything they have ever before seen. In the treatment of their lepers Norway appears to be much in advance of most countries. In Siberia, the lepers are left uncared for and helpless—left to wander about in the forests, ragged, starving, and exposed to the bitter winds and gusts of the cruel climate—shunned by all and hunted down almost as if they were beasts of prey. When leprosy appears in a village there, the victim is sent out into the wilderness with a curse upon his brow, and is forbidden henceforth to hold converse with any human thing. In some of the more merciful examples a rude hut is provided in the depths of a forest, and food will occasionally be placed within reach—but in the greater number of instances no provision is made for the preservation of life, and the exiles must look to other lepers, as wretched as themselves, for all the human help and sympathy they may hope for during the remainder of their years.

SHAMROCK.

Nursing as a Fine Art.

BY MARIAN C. PINCOFFS, M.R.B.N.A.

A WRITER in the *Lancet* some years ago, gave it as his opinion that “Nursing was a fine art, or it was nothing.” Assuredly the tendency of the age is calculated to prove the truth of his statement. The scientific side of Nursing is very much before the world at the present time. With educated Nurses

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