

## TENDING THE LITTLE DARKIES.

## A GLIMPSE OF A DEVOTED WOMEN'S CLINIC IN REMOTE BASUTOLAND.

*(From a Correspondent.)*

Very worthwhile work is being done by a woman doctor and her nurses in an off-the-beaten-track outpost of Empire, Basutoland. They run the medical and dental clinic for native children at Maseru. It was established 18 years ago, and Dr. Helen Weinbrenn has been in charge of the medical section since 1931. Since 1943 it has come under the wing of the Red Cross, which pays its expenses.

To begin with, the clinic had to cope with a lot of suspicion, as is usually the case when modern white healers come among folk of a backward race. Only about half a dozen youngsters, out of all the settlement's sufferers, used to be brought in on the two appointed days every week. Now some 70 receive treatment; they come from nine schools.

Often the first remark the visitor hears is Dr. Helen's long-standing little joke to put timid youngsters at their ease.

"Have you brought your bottle, Magnolia?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Good! Then I won't have to pour the medicine into your boots!"

The patients are encouraged to bring a physic bottle with them. These bottles are sterilised before re-issue.

The doctor declares that she has a really worthwhile job, and one can well believe it. An enormous amount of suffering is prevented among children who had a pretty tough time when they fell sick in yesteryears. Stress is laid on the importance of preventive treatment and treatment at as early a stage as possible. Poor little mites have been brought in sometimes with a pneumonia temperature of 104! Mothers of others would delay until they were covered with sores before deeming that the moment had come for something to be done about it. The children often develop septic hands and feet and bad abscesses unless early treatment is received. They very seldom get scarlet fever, but there are a good many cases of chickenpox and measles.

Doctor Helen admires the child sufferers. They do as they are told, she says, and do not whimper from pain as white children would, in some circumstances. She works with a very capable native staff. Her senior nurse, who has been at the clinic from the start, has always been popular, and many of the youngsters she used to tend now bring their own for treatment. Nurse Frances used to hang around the clinic door in its early days, hoping to be allowed to help. She was a little girl then. When she grew older she was given training and allowed to satisfy her ambition as a voluntary helper. Eventually she joined the staff. Though married now, she continues to come and help the doctor and the dentist. At Vrededorp is another clinic run for the Red Cross by Dr. Abrams and Dr. Weinbrenn. It opens two days a week for dental treatment and two days for medical. The supposition, so often heard in Britain, that African children have splendid teeth does not apply, at any rate, to those of Basutoland. They need a good deal of dental attention, but seem less afraid of the dentist than are *our* youngsters. The little ones are the bravest, too, avers Sister Frances, who ought to know, as she works with the dentist.

*Ten thousand parks where deer do run,  
Ten thousand roses in the sun,  
Ten thousand pearls beneath the sea,  
My Babe more precious is to me.*

WRITER UNKNOWN.

## A DIP INTO OUR POST BAG.

## OUR DIAMOND JUBILEE NUMBER.

It has given us much satisfaction to receive many kind words of congratulation upon the production of our Diamond Jubilee Number. To quote a few:—

The reminiscences of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's life, etc., are inspiring, she certainly was a wonderful woman and had two attributes which it is unusual to find in the same personality—namely, vision and energy of will. One so often finds the person who possesses the gift of seeing into the future has not the push and organising ability to carry their vision through and that is where she was outstanding.

When I read the different articles in the Journal of all the striving and toiling of the pioneers, I am seized with a feeling of sorrow and bewilderment at the indifference and total lack of understanding of the nurses.

There is no doubt the idea of "Service" for others is *démodé* to-day.

Will it come back do you think?

In one way we can't blame the poor nurses, it is the rest of the world who are to blame. I think we are all alike about wanting to get the best for ourselves; anyway, the best conditions. The trouble with the nurses, of course, is that they don't see what is to their advantage.

I do hope you will gain more members and so get the necessary money to finance the National Council.

E. G.

Congratulations on the last Journal, I thought it would be a Memorial Number. I think it is good to remind the young what was done by the pioneers—and by whom—because they are too apt to take things for granted.

D. W.

Must congratulate you on the Diamond Jubilee Number of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, it is excellent; this was just the moment for a re-cap. of events, wish it could be read by all nurses, especially the younger ones.

N. D.

Our regular letter from a revered friend of West Australia, has arrived, and, as usual, is full of interest, which we like to share with our readers.

She tells us of the very long and hot summer, the driest since 1888, so rain will be welcome when it comes.

There is a Home for Aged and Incapacitated Nurses at Claremont, situated between Fremantle and Perth.

This home was opened during the war, and at present there are eight inmates, each having their own bed-sitting room, for which they each pay 5s. a week and which includes electric light.

A local timber merchant supplies them with firewood free of cost, and, with three gas stoves in the kitchen, these old ladies cook what they choose.

Various hospitals and societies furnished the rooms, and they are most comfortable.

Perth Hospital probationers are responsible for the garden, and all subscribe to provide a gardener one day a week.

A lady has recently bequeathed £1,000 to the Home, which will probably be used for extensions when the building position improves.

The writer tells of a friend working in Germany in connection with displaced persons and prisoners of war, the work being sad, but interesting.

She tells of Baltic emigrants, and how they are being placed throughout Australia to work where extra labour is needed.

We learn with much regret that a fire destroyed one of Hobart's wharves containing £100,000 worth of apples waiting for despatch to Great Britain; and of lemons growing in her garden and sugar being now unrationed!

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)