

A Résumé of a Study Period

By

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IN August 1961 while I was looking through the *Nursing Journal of India*, I read a notice regarding the Edwina Mountbatten Memorial Trust Scholarship, which offered a specialised paediatric nursing course abroad. Since I had worked in Kalavati Saran Children's Hospital, New Delhi, for six and half years without any special training in paediatrics, I decided to apply for this scholarship. My only qualifications being R.N., R.M. and a post-certificate ward sister's course. I was fortunate to be awarded this scholarship.

January 14, 1962, was memorable day for me. I arrived at Tilbury Docks, London. Here it was midwinter but and the sky clear and bright. I had anticipated dark forbidding skies, snow, ice and intense cold; little did I realise this was to come at the end of the following year.

London is a vast city. The River Thames winds sluggishly through its centre, past palaces, Parliament House, the Tower, a 1000 years old, where in olden times people were imprisoned. A mixture of old and new, where modern sky scrapers, rub shoulders with the past. My way across the Capital of the Commonwealth took me to the headquarters of the Edwina Mountbatten Trust, where General Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir Cyril May received me warmly and hoped my stay in England would be enjoyable and instructive. I must tell of the moving staircases, "escalators" as they are called, and you find them in all large buildings, shops and the underground railway stations. These are staircases in pairs; one moving up and one down away from you. Taking a little jump, at the same time clutching the moving handrail, raising my sari a little so it is not caught up in the moving stairs goodness only knows where, my 'adventure'

had begun; I moved up and down as occasion required.

My destination lay 200 miles north in Liverpool, capital city of Merseyside (population 1,000,000). Many ships from all over the world, dock and sail from this sea-port. Every race on earth is found here, living in their own little groups; very cosmopolitan. Liverpool people themselves are a mixture of English, Irish, Scotch and Welsh.

I arrived at Lime Street Station, Liverpool, on January 16 and made my way by taxi to the Alder Hey Children's Hospital in the West Derby District. I was received by the Lady Receptionist in the Nurses Home and taken to my room on the Sister's Corridor.

Miss K.I. Cawood, Matron of the Hospital, received me the following morning, inquired kindly about my journey, then had her deputy Matron, Miss J. Robertson, take me to obtain uniforms and have a medical check-up.

Aldery Hey Hospital for sick children is a large teaching centre attached to the Liverpool University. It has an international reputation. The patients come from Merseyside, Northwales, and "Isle of Man"; and from Austria, Singapore and Africa come patients for specialised neo-natal surgery. Much research work is done and results are excellent for the welfare of children. There is a Chair for Child Health. The Hospital covers general medicine, surgery, orthopaedics and neo-natal surgery. The Nurses Teaching Department has a Tutorial staff of six; it is very well equipped with film projectors, slide projectors, instruments and anatomical aids.

The Tutorial programme is very full in the second year and third year. I was to condense this into one year then sit the General Nursing Council Examination for R.S.C.N. It was an exciting but a

rather unnerving prospect.

My first impression of Alder Hey was the bigness and this persisted throughout my stay here. I was introduced to hospital ward work in the Neo-natal Unit, which deals with the newly born babies who require surgery. The most common congenital deformities are oesophageal atresia, rectal atresia, exampholos, hiatus hernia etc. and they are nursed by a highly specialised team of Sisters. The premature babies are nursed naked in a constant temperature of 75°F—80°F.

In the Burns Unit children are nursed naked in a humid temperature of 75°F. The Unit is run by a specialised staff on the shift duty system. Temperature of the ward is maintained by a generator outside the ward. All doors and windows are double to prevent infection. The Staff change into special uniforms and shoes before entering the ward. They also wear masks and gowns when attending the patients. As recovery is usually a long business, the patients have a large television, wireless and cine-projector for private film shows.

In the Plastic Unit, cosmetic surgery is the main work; for example, correction of bat ears or removal of extra digits, pedical skin grafts are frequent. These require careful nursing. The sick children attend daily school as they do in all the wards, whenever possible.

The Orthodontic Unit is another specialised unit, recently opened at Alder Hey Hospital. Here the mouths of tiny babies who suffer from cleft lip and cleft palate are moulded back to normal again, by a skilled team of plastic and dental surgeons.

I commenced a three-week whole-time study course in the lecture room. An introduction to medicine, surgery, pathology,

pharmacology, nursing practice and ward management. This was more advanced than I had expected, because it followed a first year course on anatomy, physiology and science, all subjects are essential, and each very well correlated.

Back to the ward on night duty, every student does three months night duty a year starting at 8 p.m. and finishing at 8 a.m. They work four nights and then have three nights off in the first week and two on the following week and so on. All nurses do an initial period of relief work. This consists of taking over different wards when the night nurse is off, so enabling each nurse to get a good general basis of various types of nursing. In the case of an extremely ill child, the relief nurse is sometimes asked to 'special', which means that the ill child is her sole charge and she does not leave the bedside except for meal breaks, when she is relieved. A Night Superintendent is in-charge of the Hospital at night. Under her are a team of sisters who do 2 hourly rounds on the wards and ensure that the correct nursing procedure is followed in all cases. The night nurse must call on her, if she requires advice or if a doctor is needed. Injections and D.D.A. drugs are given by the Staff Nurses. The atmosphere on night duty is very pleasant and friendly and once into the routine, sleep is not too difficult during the day.

This has been a warm summer. A trip to Blackpool to see the illuminations is an annual feature here. Fantastic, gaily lit streets and buildings, great crowds singing and shouting in cafes and beer houses. Men and women in great crowds, some drunk with success, some with happiness, others with beer.

November took me back to study block.

For me medical, surgical, infectious diseases, orthopaedics, pharmacology and pathology lectures. One month before the finals, a hospital examination (Practical and Theoretical) is conducted by external tutors, to give us reassurance and confidence. I personally feel this should be carried out in our country in schools of nursing.



TO HEALTH VISITORS AND STATE REPRESENTATIVES OF HVL

YOU will be glad to know that the TNAI Council have appointed a Committee for Health Visitors to study their problems and place them before the Council for suitable action.

Although there is provision for such a Committee in the By-laws of the Health Visitors League, so far as I know, this is the first time the Committee has been actually appointed; it is not appointed strictly according to the By-laws, because the Health Visitors League is not organised into State Branches. This committee will therefore act as an interim committee till such time as the regular committee is appointed.

I propose to call a meeting of this committee before the Trained Nurses Association of India Council meets in November 1963.

I request all the Health Visitors, specially HVL Representatives on State Branches, to send me items for the agenda for this meeting. All items should be supported by background explanations and relevant references. It is in the interests of health visitors to co-operate in this matter.

D. S. ELISHA,
Hon. Secretary,
Health Visitors League
Niloufer Health School,
Saifabad, Hyderabad,
Andhra Pradesh.

The State Examination drew near i.e., February 1963. Then March and home; I sailed from Liverpool to India.

I returned to my hospital on 16th April this year. I plan to organise a ward teaching programme in our paediatric department for the Nursing Staff and students. For a proper field for teaching, another block of 148 beds is coming up. I feel very proud as the authorities did ask my opinion on a few details in the plan of the building.

In the Lady Hardinge Medical College Hospital we have a committee to organise staff education programmes. I will make a special effort to help in giving lectures on paediatric nursing. There is a programme in our hospital to start a Creche for our Class IV employees' children, in which we will be called upon to take an active part.

In our Well Baby Clinic, public health is emphasised and, here I

feel I can give them suggestions from my own knowledge gained during my studies abroad.

Before I conclude this report I would like to thank my Nursing Superintendent, Miss B. Dawson and the TNAI, Miss T. K. Adranvala, Kumari Lakshmi Devi, General Secretary, Miss A. Cherian, Hon. Secretary of N.F.N.C., for their advice and guidance given during my stay abroad.

I have no words to express my gratitude to Miss K.I. Cawood, Matron, Mrs. H. Mobbs, Principal Tutor, and the staff of Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool, for their kindness and professional guidance given to me throughout my stay in Liverpool.

I owe many thanks to the Countess of Brecknock and General Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir Cyril May for very kindly extending the privilege of scholarships to Indian Nurses. It was my privilege to be the first fortunate scholar under the Trust in India.