

knowledge of sanitation and the scientific care of the sick is so much at a premium, are quite incapable of going back to their villages to render there the service that is so sorely needed? Might it not be possible to develop some sort of an Organized Health Service for village clinic work where student nurses could affiliate? Perhaps in the cities where Health Schools are located affiliation could be effected between the Training Schools and the Health School, so that *all* nurses would have at least some idea of the meaning of Health nursing.

When these ideals are realized in India our Health Work will more nearly approach the standard of work being done in other countries. And it is to be hoped that India will take her place along with the other nations who have representatives on the Public Health Committee of the International Council of Nurses, which will meet in Paris and Brussels in July, 1933.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CALCUTTA HOSPITAL NURSES' INSTITUTION¹

By COLONEL BARNADO

The Institution was founded in the year 1859 chiefly owing to the kindly influence of Lady Canning, wife of the first Viceroy of India. No report upon its first establishment was published until the year 1863. I do not think I can do better than give you extracts from that report which stated that the general success of the Institution and the liberal support which it has continued to receive, furnish a double reason for giving additional publicity to its proceedings.

For a long time previous to the moment when the movement for introducing female nurses was originated, the two large hospitals had been visited by residents in Calcutta who desired to afford to European sufferers in a foreign land the comfort of sympathy and kind words; but it was during the hot season of 1859 that a visitor in the wards of the Medical College Hospital took first steps towards obtaining the material boon of a more constant and more humane attendance round the sick beds, by means of female nurses.

The following is an extract taken from the first circular issued by the ladies who enrolled themselves into a committee to give the scheme a practical organisation :—

'All will, on general grounds, acknowledge how medical skill is assisted, and recovery hastened, by kind and watchful nursing, and

¹ An Address delivered at a Meeting of the Rotary Club in 1928.

how such ministrations flow most readily and effectually from a woman's hands; but the peculiar circumstances of an Indian hospital seem to lend additional force to the argument in favour of introducing into them this new element. The suffering European, ignorant of every language but his own, or therefore unable to make his wants known and with illness aggravated by a trying climate, cannot under the system of nursing adopted in Indian hospitals have all those comforts which all who have been ill know how to appreciate.

'Deficiencies such as these, the proposed introduction of Female nurses is intended to supply, and it is hoped that by committing to carefully selected women acting under the direct control of the medical officers of the hospital the more soothing and comforting of a nurse's duties, a new and beneficial element may be introduced into some of our hospital wards.'

The approval and consent of the Medical Authorities were sought from the first; Dr. Forsyth, Inspector General of Hospitals, and Dr. Eatwell, Principal of the Medical College, gave a cordial support and the early efforts of the ladies' committee were much aided by the professors of the Hospital who allowed the above-mentioned circular to go forth to the public confirmed by their signatures.

The pressing necessities of the Mutiny had already led to the employment of Female Nurses at the expense of Government in the Military hospitals at Allahabad, and the testimony of the Chief Medical authority of that station, Dr. Beatson, to their value, helped to form a kindred institution in Calcutta. To the group of tried nurses at Allahabad the committee looked in the first instance for materials wherewith to commence their work, and after some unavoidable delay caused by the necessity of raising the necessary funds to start with the Committee had the satisfaction of installing in the wards of the Medical College Hospital at the end of November 1859, two nurses from Allahabad and one from Calcutta who thus became the nucleus of an institution which as that report states, now numbers 20 or more, and possesses ample capacity for extension. Other nurses were shortly added thus enabling the committee to furnish one to each of the four male wards and one to the female ward. The patients in each ward amount on an average to 25.

The whole of that report of 1863 makes most interesting reading, but I have not the time to go further into it to-day and it may be appropriate that I should now tell you something of the starting of the Lady Canning Home.

The Lady Canning Home was built in the year 1874, twelve years after Lady Canning's lamented death had inspired her friends with

the earnest desire to perpetuate her memory by a work of practical usefulness. The long delay was due partly to a misunderstanding between the trustees which resulted in a law suit, partly from the insufficiency of the money collected to effect the proposed scheme. The Canning Fund was however not altogether useless, as between the years 1866 and 1868 the trustees paid to the committee of the Hospital Nurses' Institution a small sum, part of the interest of the Canning Fund, which enabled the committee to establish a temporary home and provide training for a few nurses, who by their earnings in attendance on private patients covered their cost. In 1868 however, the Canning Trustees withdrew their grant and the Hospital Nurses' Committee having no fund at their disposal were unwillingly forced to close the home in 1869. For the next five years the Canning Funds accumulated until in 1874 it was decided to build a house to be known as the Canning Home. At that time the fund amounted to Rs. 85,000 and gave a monthly income of about Rs. 370. The Government of Bengal gave a suitable piece of ground close to the General Hospital and the house containing two sitting rooms and four bed rooms was built at a cost of Rs. 33,808.

The Hospital Nurses' Institution and the Canning Home drifted on side by side until the year 1877 when as a trustee of the Canning Fund, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal proposed to the Hospital Nurses' Committee that they should become a sub-committee to the Canning Trustees, and that all practical arrangements should be left to them, and that the ladies of the Canning Home should be under their control subject to the approval of the Canning Trustees. This plan has answered admirably and the two charities which obviously were intended to work together now combine in their full share of usefulness.

From that time onwards the average number of nurses employed has shown a steady increase and correspondingly increased subscriptions have been forthcoming though as I will tell you not sufficient to meet our expenditure at the present time. I fear I have drifted rather from my subject, the work of the Institution, but I trust you will forgive me. The Institution undertakes to recruit, train and provide free of charge the entire nursing staff at the leading Calcutta hospitals including the Presidency General, Medical College, Eden Maternity, Prince of Wales, Ezra and Eye Hospitals. A few nurses at the Medical College Hospital and some dhais at the Eden Hospital are also available for private engagement outside the hospitals at moderate fees. In addition nursing staff has been supplied to the Carmichael Hospital for Tropical Diseases.

I do not think it is generally realized that the Institution bears the whole cost of the food, clothing, pay and servants for the nurses. The only assistance derived from the hospitals is a small proportion of the fees amounting to Rs. 42,000 for 1927, while the hospital Port Dues Fund contributed Rs. 6,900 on behalf of seamen nursed in the Presidency General Hospital.

As regards the staff at the close of the year 1927, omitting the Superintendent and Training staff, the Institution was employing 223 nurses, while 48 Government and private pupil nurses and dhais were also being trained in the Eden Hospital.

At the Medical College hospitals the Nursing Staff are under the training and supervision of a Lady Superintendent ably assisted by five Senior Nursing Sisters. At the Eden Hospital the Institution is still bearing the cost of some extra nurses originally appointed on account of the shortage of Pupil Nurses for Maternity Training.

The new Eye Hospital in Medical College group was opened in 1926 and the present staff consists of one Senior Nursing Sister, one night sister and several nurses who are interchangeable with the other hospitals of the group. I may say that the cost of this staff will increase substantially every year owing to increments of pay to the nurses. As regards the Carmichael Hospital for Tropical Diseases since 1921 the institution has trained and supplied the Nursing Staff to this hospital, the cost of which has been defrayed by the hospital. The staff at the close of the year consisted of one ward sister, one Night Sister, and 17 nurses.

The question of adequate finance has, you will readily understand, been one of the chief problems before the committee of the Institution. Our income is mainly derived from subscriptions by the public. We receive a grant of Rs. 1,00,000 annually from the Government of Bengal, also small grants from the Corporation of Calcutta, the Hospital Port Dues Fund, and additional fees from the hospitals.

Nurses' Holiday and Convalescent Home

7 Borebank Road, Bangalore.

Hostesses :—

Miss M. BARTLEET,

Q.A.M.N.S.I. (retired),

Miss M. MARSH, (to whom apply for terms etc.)

Late of Zenana Mission Tuberculosis Hospital.