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RED CROSS JUBILEE YEAR

TO HEAL THE SICK

SWISS WOMEN CONTRIBUTE

The fact that the women of Switzerland do not have the right to vote — with the recent exception of women in certain parts of French Switzerland — is generally known to the world at large.

But less commonly known is the extent to which Swiss women have contributed to some of the most important social works of their country.

This summer, a special stamp is being issued by the Swiss Postal Authorities, to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of one such woman: Dr. Anna Heer (1863-1918), co-founder and first Doctor-in-Charge of the Swiss Nursing School in Zurich.

YESTERDAY

The Swiss Nursing School is an achievement of women for women.

It began as a result of the initiative and foresight of Dr. Anna Heer, working with the first Swiss woman doctor, Dr. Heim-Vögtlin, and Mrs. Ida Schneider. These three had the backing and assistance of women from every class and every region of the country, because there was a great awareness of the need to improve the status of unaffiliated nurses by means of better training and closer association.

At the same time, a need was recognized for a new kind of hospital, one that would provide young women doctors with the kind of experience and practical training that can only come from hospital work.

The founders of the Nursing School in Zurich believed that such an achievement would thrive and have lasting effects — and events have proved them right. From the laying of the cornerstone, on 11th July 1899, to the present day, the institution thus began has experienced a steady, if at times most difficult, progress. The earliest stages, the preliminary work that preceded the founding of the School and its hospital, was perhaps the hardest of all, requiring the unceasing efforts and energies of these forward-looking women day and night, for months and years.

In the late 1800's, a glaring gap existed in Swiss medical facilities. There was an almost total lack of trained personnel both able and willing to practise home nursing (that is, the nursing of patients privately, in their homes). What value had all the knowledge of a doctor, all the medication he might prescribe, if there was no one present who was qualified to see that his orders were carried out, the medication correctly administered, and the patient properly cared for?

In addition to this grave problem, was the fact that a shortage of available hospital space was making itself acutely felt.

Anna Heer was not the woman to be satisfied with simply observing these facts. As soon as she had acquired a comprehensive knowledge of the situation, she began to look for a way to alleviate it. Something had to be done. But what? Where to begin? Where to make a dent in the apparently growing wall of inadequacy?

It became clear to Anna Heer that a meeting of all practising nurses was necessary; further, that their knowledge must be improved through training courses, and that young girls must be recruited and thoroughly trained to swell the ranks of the nursing profession.

With these aims as a foundation, the Nursing School in Zurich was instituted, and became one of the first Swiss centres for the training of medical nurses and infant-and-child nurses.

TODAY

After passing their examinations and receiving their diplomas from the School in Zurich, the nurses are free to practise their profession in any part of the country, and are assured of uniformly acceptable salaries.

The avowed object of the School is: to make of its students independent, responsible people, and to enable them to serve their fellow men through well-based professional training. There is no other-worldly air of the cloister about the Nursing School, nor any insistence upon a particular religious observance. But neither is there any lack of discipline, or any superficiality. For the School holds high as its standard the ideals of Florence Nightingale, founder of the modern nursing profession, and those of Henri Dunant, founder of the Red Cross.

TOMORROW

The shortage of nurses is a decided problem in Switzerland, as it is in other countries. The Swiss Red Cross, after an exhaustive survey made at the beginning of 1960, has demonstrated that, on the basis of existing hospital plans projected to 1966, there will at that time be a need for an additional 400 nurses of every kind in Switzerland alone.

The causes of this shortage are several: First, the expansion in size and increase in number of Swiss hospitals; second, the most intensive care given to patients today,

as a result of advancing medical techniques and specialized nursing practices; and finally, though it may sound a paradox, the steadily increasing loss of nursing personnel as a result of marriage. despite the otherwise encouraging increase in the number of candidates for nursing diplomas.

At the same time, the demands made upon nurses are increasing constantly, and the Swiss nursing schools, like the one in Zurich, are becoming ever more selective, as their standards of professional training rise.

What was accomplished 64 years ago by Dr. Anna Heer and her colleagues — the founding of a good training institution to help alleviate the shortage of nurses — thus emerges as a stroke of vital work for today and for the future as well. The Swiss Nursing School in Zurich is fulfilling an important function, by operating a well-equipped, scientifically advanced hospital run by experienced women doctors; and by offering theoretical and practical training for student nurses. *E.F.-S.*

(By courtesy " Swissair Gazette ".)

ACCIDENTS

Lack of space has prevented us from reporting accidents so far. Every week our news sheets from Switzerland include more or less serious accidents which have occurred. The most numerous are on the roads, and these, as well as fire and mountaineering mishaps, will be referred to in a later issue.

Accidents happen everywhere; to begin with in the home, where carelessness often has far-reaching consequences. A housewife in Bellinzona died through scalding herself with boiling water. An old woman at Arbon was found dead in her flat after a fortnight. In Bienne, a fifteen-year-old girl fell from the 14th floor of a skyscraper and was killed instantaneously. At Frauenfeld a child of eight fell from the fourth floor while sleepwalking and by a miracle escaped any major injury. A small child in the Canton of Aargau died after a screw had got stuck in his throat.

Poisoning from " mushrooms " has been reported several times, so have accidents on the land, either because horses have run wild or a tractor or other piece of machinery was wrongly used. A mountain farmer at Meiringen was killed when he was out searching for a lost goat.

Death and injuries have been caused on several occasions to men coming into contact accidentally with high tension transmission lines, and recently in a large business house in Zurich, a workman was killed by a lift which was being repaired.

Reports of workmen falling to death from scaffoldings on building sites or from roofs are received every now and then. From an interesting

ACCIDENT CHART

for 1962 in the Brown Boveri Bulletin we learn that in their works injuries to hands and fingers increased last year and represented 42% of all bodily harm done, feet and toes 18% and the rest of the body from between 7.9% (torso) to 1.2% (thigh). 21% of all accidents were caused by falling from steps or slipping, 20% by tools or sharp objects and 15% by mishaps while busy on machinery. In 13% of all accidents at Brown Boveri's, falling articles were blamed, in 6% carrying goods by hand, and in 4% chemicals or burning. The rest were caused by mechanical load transport and electric current.

ACCIDENTS IN SPORT

happen frequently in every field. The Swiss Society for the Prevention of Accidents launched a special appeal early in the year for safe ski-ing. Over 100,000 copies of a booklet of instruction were distributed in a first attempt.

Talking of accidents in the snow — the brakes of a snow plough on the line Altstaetten (St. Gall) — Gais (Appenzell) suddenly failed and the plough shot downhill. The operator could jump clear, but when the heavy machine finally got derailed it plunged into a group of children, of whom several were injured.

Now during the summer many swimming accidents have been reported. A rather high proportion of the victims are foreign workers. The Swiss News Agency (Agence Télégraphique Suisse) published a special appeal in Italian by the Swiss Advice Bureau for the Prevention of Accidents, warning against swimming after a meal, diving in unknown waters, and bathing in unsafe places like fast rivers or near steep lake shores.

Amongst accidents during military service a recent tragic occurrence has been related when two officer cadets (" Aspiranten ") lost their lives on a swimming test in full kit.

Accounts of boating accidents, too, were sent in June. A folding canoe capsized on the Lake of Constance, causing the death of one of the four occupants. Two motor-boats on the Lake of Zug collided, resulting in the loss of one life. A few weeks previously a freight vessel on the Lake of Geneva sank to a depth of 200 metres; four men drowned. Earlier this month a motor-boat carrying a party of 170 passengers collided with the quayside at Stein-am-Rhein. Miraculously there were only minor injuries and negligible damage to clothes and equipment. Incidentally, the Town Hall at Stein-am-Rhein had suffered serious harm last year when a 23-metre-long motor-crane smashed against the building. Serious

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

fortunately are rare in Switzerland, but a deplorable number of accidents occur at level crossings. The Swiss Federal Railways published a report from which we glean that in 1962 there were 110 accidents at the 3,845 level crossings, causing injuries to 61 people, of whom 38 died.

Since the only major train collision last summer, at Schoenenwerd, which resulted in the death of two men, there has been only one bigger accident, at Sihlbrugg in July this year — a collision which caused injuries to 19 passengers and the conductor of a fast train.

EXPLOSIONS

have been reported from various places in Switzerland during recent months. After the mysterious explosions in several parts of Lucerne last summer, the explosions in Zug, and a week later at a petrol station at Cham (Zug), a serious explosion occurred at the Geigy works at Schweizerhalle (Basle) last autumn, when three men were injured and a fourth was found dead the next day inside the exploded container, a huge screw having pierced his heart. Three explosions have been reported from Geneva in the course of the year. The worst occurred in May on