

Miss Hardy's Farewell to the West London Hospital.

BY AN OLD WEST LONDONER WHO WAS PRESENT.

On the last evening of the year 1904 Miss Irene Hardy gave a farewell party to the staff of the West London Hospital, past and present.

The guests assembled at 7 p.m., each one being greeted in the entrance hall of the hospital by their gracious and cheery hostess. The spacious out-patients' hall had been converted into a concert room, a platform, beautifully decorated with flowers and palms, being erected at one side and seats conveniently arranged all round.

Many old fellow-workers met and enjoyed friendly chat, and mingled their regrets with those of the present staff that one so deservedly popular was about to sever her professional connection with their Alma Mater.

A most excellent programme had been prepared, divided into two parts, to enable both night and day staff to enjoy some of the festivities. There were songs, humorous and otherwise, musical sketches, whistling solos, recitations, and last, but not least, most amusing and wonderful performances by Mr. C. Bertram, the prestidigitateur.

At the end of the first part, Dr. Donald Hood, the Senior Physician of the hospital, mounted the platform, and, in a few well-chosen words, explained that the gathering, though so enjoyable a one, was not altogether unmingled with sadness, as it was the occasion of their farewell to Miss Irene Hardy, with whom some of them had been connected for twenty-five years, and all present for some time, and who, by her unflinching kindness and the good work she had done for the hospital, had endeared herself to them all. He then called for Miss Hardy, who was escorted to the platform by Mr. Gilbert, the Secretary, and asked her to accept, as a mark of affection and esteem from the medical staff, past and present, a handsome solid silver tray and a gold curb bracelet.

Miss Hardy thanked the donors of this handsome gift, saying that she should use the tray every day and wear the bracelet always.

Mr. Lloyd, the anaesthetist, added a few remarks of appreciation to those already made by Dr. Donald Hood.

Mr. Gilbert then, on behalf of the nursing staff (past and present), the office, pathologists, dispensers, servants, and porters, presented her with a fitted folding writing-table, bearing a suitably-inscribed silver plate, a travelling rug, a purse of gold, and a Russian leather-bound volume containing the names of all who had subscribed, autographs where possible.

Miss Hardy, who was deeply moved, as, indeed, were all present, said that she valued the affection and esteem of her kind friends even more than their beautiful gifts, and spoke of the happiness it had been to her to work there for so many years.

After this, the second half of the programme was given, and then the company retired to the Post Graduate College, where an excellent buffet supper was awaiting them. Everyone then took their leave of Miss Hardy, congratulating her on the way in which she had gone through a most trying ordeal, and expressing their regret that the occasion which had been

in all other respects such a singularly pleasant one, implied the severance of long time ties.

It may here be stated that the entertainment was given absolutely by Miss Hardy, and that the presentations were to her an unexpected accompaniment.

In addition to the presentations made on December 31st, Miss Hardy had already received from the Hospital Committee a silver fitted dressing bag, a travelling clock, and a framed testimonial. The latter is indeed a work of art, being illuminated in every soft and delicate art tint one can imagine, with touches of gold here and there. The size of the scroll is about 18 in. by 12 in.; it is in a massive gold frame. At the top is a delicate water-colour sketch of the hospital, on either side a scroll of conventional leaf design; with the following statements running in ribbon style; on the left side, "Admitted as Nurse Probationer, September 29th, 1879; appointed Hon. Lady Superintendent, January 10th, 1881." On the right side, "Appointed Lady Superintendent on paid Staff, July 1st, 1890; appointed Matron, March 15th, 1897." At the base is the red seal of the hospital and the date of presentation of testimonial, November 14th, 1904.

The centre is taken up with the following words:—

"Presented to Miss Irene Hardy upon her resignation as Matron of the West London Hospital by the Board of Management, as an expression of its very high appreciation of valued services rendered by her during the twenty-five years that she has been on the Staff."

The record of her association with the hospital is in itself a proof of the high esteem with which the management of the hospital has always regarded her, and in parting from her the Board sincerely hopes that she may be spared for many years to enjoy the rest so honourably earned by her faithful devotion to the noble work of tending the suffering poor."

It may be interesting here to note the changes that have been wrought in the West London Hospital during the twenty-five years in which Miss Hardy's influence has been at work.

When she entered as a probationer, there were only forty beds (there are now 154) and a staff of about six nurses, whose training was, of necessity, not equal to those of the present day.

From the time she took up work as Hon. Lady Superintendent to the present day Miss Hardy has made it her aim to raise the tone of the hospital, to increase the comforts of the nurses, to bring their training up to the standard of the time. She has watched the improvements in other hospitals, and, like the sensible woman she is, has adopted the methods which in them have seemed to her worthy of emulation; she has increased the length of training from eighteen months to three years; she has introduced lectures and examinations and abolished the old term of Head Nurse for Sister. From the commencement of her taking up office she has been constantly in the wards and the theatre, being in the habit of accompanying one and another of the visiting staff on their rounds, and being present at operations, thus keeping herself intimately in touch with all modern methods of nursing and surgery, and knowing personally the capabilities of each of her nurses.

It was an interesting testimony to the popularity of Miss Irene Hardy amongst the medical staff that, with the exception of three who sent telegrams of regret, the whole staff, past and present, physicians, surgeons, and anaesthetists, were there for the presentation.

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