

Our Foreign Letter.

THE TWO SERVICE HOSPITALS AT GIBRALTAR.

Having occasion to stay two or three weeks at Gibraltar while waiting for a steamer to take me



to Algiers, it suddenly occurred to me that I should like to see over the Royal Military Hospital, which is finely situated close to Europa Point.

An Engineer

officer quartered at "Gib." kindly gave me an introduction to the Surgeon-Colonel, and the latter officer most politely offered to take me round the hospital himself.

Three reasons induced me to make this visit.

Shall I admit that a certain pride of country, which nestles away somewhere in my constitution, and occasionally attacks me with sufficient violence, was one cause of this desire? In an ordinary way I am very conscious of the fairly glaring faults and deficiencies of England and the English. But there are some things which we manage better than any other nation, I do believe; and, though no comparison is drawn between ourselves and our cousins over the water, as regards the management and general condition of hospitals, I think we are bad to beat where our care of the sick in hospital is concerned.

A second reason was that I had never seen over a military hospital.

And, thirdly, I thought that the Editor of the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* might like a letter from me on the subject.

Punctually at 4 p.m., the time appointed, I drove up to the gate of the building, which is quite new, and in the style of its exterior architecture suggests a castle or a prison rather than a hospital. I was ushered by an orderly into the doctor's office room, and was received by the Colonel in khaki, and introduced to a gentleman who, like myself, desired to see the hospital.

Light, air, absolute cleanliness, and the order inseparable from the Service, all these, it goes without saying, I found in perfection. But I was hardly prepared for the lavishness with which Government has supplied the hospital with the costly apparatus of modern medical science. The operating theatre was a striking illustration of this fact. Every appliance, down to the latest disinfectant—the name of which has slipped me, but it belongs to the family of creolines—seemed to be there. In passing I must describe the water system of the hospital.

Gibraltar is not too well supplied with water. A large new reservoir is in building, and when finished and in working order, the inhabitants of the Rock expect to have a plentiful store of fresh water. But at present three kinds of water are used in the town—fresh water for drinking purposes, sanitary water (a mixture of salt and fresh) for cooking and washing purposes, and salt water for baths, &c. As the rainfall this year, on the Rock even, was ten inches below the

average, it will be readily understood how carefully the fresh water is husbanded.

Through the hospital then, into the ablution rooms, as they are called, run three pipes containing respectively the three kinds of water. These pipes, to distinguish them, are painted in different colours, and to the end of the fresh-water pipe in each ablution room is attached a filter; thus all water drawn from this pipe is filtered before it comes through the tap.

Needless to say, the bath and lavatory rooms are spick and span.

The building can accommodate about 230 patients, and another wing is in course of construction to house another thirty. At the time of my visit some 160 men were in-patients. A great feature of this hospital in a sub-tropical station are the long, open galleries where the patients can sit or lie out and enjoy the soft sea air. Two consumptive patients were living and sleeping out of doors in one of the galleries, but Colonel B. said they would soon be sent home, as naturally they could not remain in the Service. From all these galleries the views are charming over the Rock, the bay, and the harbour, where the Atlantic Fleet of nine grand battleships is now anchored. Then one looks across the bay to the Spanish shore and distant mountains, while away to the left across the Straits rise the beautiful mountains of Morocco.

The Colonel showed us the installation for the Röntgen rays; this in itself must be a very costly feature of the hospital.

I was struck with the fact that hardly any of the pictures and other decorations of the wards were from private donors, with the exception of the Emperor of Germany, who, after his recent visit to the hospital, sent a present of six fine-coloured gravure pictures of various phases of military life. Our Queen similarly, after her visit last spring, sent a large full-length photograph of herself, which hangs in the entrance hall. But most of the other pictures in the wards, and sundry other luxuries, were bought by the Colonel out of some special fund, on which he has the power to draw. It seems strange also that none of the English ladies living in Gibraltar, more especially the wives of officers quartered there, appear to take any interest in the hospital or to visit the patients.

The kitchen was most spacious and well-appointed, and the linen-room a delight in its orderliness and well-filled shelves. Every soldier going into the hospital is supplied with night shirt, slippers, handkerchief, &c. The dining-room was spacious, and there were even flowers on the table, which was laid for tea. Beyond the dining-room is a recreation and reading-room; these two rooms are separated from each other by a combination of sliding and folding doors, of which the mechanism seemed to run very smoothly, as the orderly in attendance pushed and folded them back. Thus, for entertainments, the two rooms can be thrown into one, when, as Colonel B. remarked with pride, it is, he believes, the largest room in Gibraltar. The out-patients' room is called the day room. It is almost needless to remark that here, as in all our military hospitals, there is an Army Service Nursing Sister to every ward under whom orderlies work, and not nurses as in the general hospitals. Each ward contains from twenty to twenty-eight beds; but there are also separate wards for enteric, two or three patients in one ward, and several wards for one patient only; these are chiefly for officers.

I did not like to touch a possible sore spot by asking

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