

The Hospital World.

THE WEST LONDON HOSPITAL.

In a busy suburb close to a railway terminus and to many important tram-lines, stands the West London Hospital, Hammersmith, whose resources are strained to the uttermost, both financially and in regard to accommodation, to meet the demands made upon it, as the only general hospital in a considerable area in a populous centre. The beds could always be more than filled, while the amount of surgical work is large compared even with that of the principal London hospitals.

The casualty department is situated on the left of the front door, and consists of one small room. The inconvenience and insufficiency of this will be realised by all acquainted with the work which falls upon this department in a busy hospital. One small room for the reception of the men, women and children who may be brought in as accident cases is a palpably inadequate provision. Thus, if a man is occupying the couch, and a "stretcher case," this time a woman, is brought in, to the casualty room she has to go also, and if another such case should come, and accidents, as all nurses know, always do come in rushes, it must be put down in the hall—the centre of the hospital, through which everyone passes—until one of the first two cases is disposed of, because there is absolutely not room for another stretcher in the casualty department. No wonder that the Committee, albeit they do not know where the money is coming from for the necessary alterations, have decided to empty a ward, lying behind the casualty room, of patients in order to extend its accommodation. This means that the top storey, which is at present used for nurses' bedrooms, will have to be utilised as a ward, and the displaced nurses—well, accommodation will have to be found somewhere outside the hospital for them.

In the "old block" one finds the floors are still what are known colloquially as "scrubbed boards," boards, moreover, which have been scrubbed and scrubbed till all the original smoothness has been lost and their rough texture must afford a delightful hiding place in which germs can laugh to scorn all efforts of the most diligent to dislodge them. The bathroom accommodation is very confined also, and in some instances bath-room and kitchen are in one. New bedsteads are also badly needed; in short, for the genuine philanthropist there is ample scope for a considerable outlay. How is it that the hospital is so sorely in

need of funds? Well, there is a fashion in hospitals as in everything else. For instance, it is but a short drive in the afternoon from the West End to some of our Children's Hospitals. It is a pleasure to visit the well-appointed wards and to see the children at their tea, cheerful and happy.

There is no sentiment and little attraction about a hospital whose address is Hammersmith, and whose wards bear so palpably the stamp of poverty. Nevertheless, would the wealthy but go and see for themselves, they would find that with their aid those wards could be made as comfortable and cheerful as any others. Indeed, the whole block might be rebuilt on an up-to-date design. Could there be a greater pleasure to one who really has the welfare of the sick at heart than to see arising, in the place of wards in which so much good work has been done, under most difficult circumstances, a block of buildings equal to the requirements of the case, with sanitary floors, tiled walls, ample bathrooms, modern bedsteads, aseptic furniture, and all the various items which contribute to the charm and the utility of a hospital at the present day.

In the new wing the wards are bright and airy, and the polished floors in which the Matron and Sisters take considerable pride, give an air of comfort and homeliness inevitably absent where boards are bare. There are twenty beds besides cots in these wards, so there is plenty of ground to be covered by the nurses in the course of the day. An electric light hangs over each bed, which can be placed behind it should the patient be well enough to read. The Sisters in this block have very nice bed-sitting rooms, to which are attached tiny dressing rooms, an addition which will be appreciated by all who have had experience of the drawbacks of the ordinary bed-sitting room.

How is it that hospital architects never learn the need of cupboards? Here, as elsewhere, the cry is for cupboards. If the plans for a hospital were submitted to a Committee of Matrons those would certainly be disqualified which fell short in this essential.

The Nurses' Home—well, that needs a fairy godmother to rebuild it; so does also the out-patient department. But notwithstanding its inconveniences, the poor seem to appreciate it, says the Matron, Miss Nevile, for they flock to it till there is scarcely standing room. In spite of the manifest needs of the hospital, Miss Nevile is proud of the work it does, and the nurses it turns out. They seem to meet the requirements of the public, and are popular when they take up outside work.

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