

ADMINISTRATION CLASS.

THE MARIE CURIE HOSPITAL.

In view of the development of one of the greatest advances of modern times—that of Radium treatment for Cancer, the visit of the Fellows and Members of the Administration Class of the British College of Nurses to the Marie Curie Hospital on Tuesday, March 13th, 1934, proved exceptionally interesting and instructive.

This is a hospital for the treatment of women suffering from cancer and allied diseases, founded by the Cancer Research Committee of the London Association of the Medical Women's Federation, and officered by Medical Women.

On reaching that beautiful part of London, Fitzjohn's Avenue, Hampstead, we found the Marie Curie Hospital comprises the premises of two fine country houses that have been so effectively converted to their present use. We were most kindly received by the Matron, Miss E. L. Ashby, A.R.R.C., who awaited us in the beautiful entrance hall of the Hospital.

The class was conducted to the Wards on the first floor by a staircase of charming design, built at a period when England spent lavishly on the erection of splendid houses.

Charlotte Ward was first visited, situated next to the Theatre, with accommodation for five beds, where the patients are admitted for 48 hours' preparation prior to, and for 24 hours after, Radium Treatment in the Theatre. Here we learned that treatment before and after the application of Radium is a highly technical process, and requires skilled nursing; a point noted: that aperients administered to these cases must be free of minerals.

We were then shown, on the same corridor, how radium is stored in a Milner's special safe in a solid block of lead, into which radium, in its platinum tubes, is placed in specially leaded tubes which fit into the round holes made in the block of lead, reminding one of a sand martin's nest. Here we learned that 30 milligrammes of radium cost about £30.

The Matron very kindly provided gowns, when the members of the class were invited (in relays) to be present in the Theatre to see radium treatment, by the kind consent of the Director, Miss Hurdon, M.D., C.M., who was herself present, and who most generously showed the chart of the case, and explained something of the treatment, so that all the members of the class were privileged to have this valuable instruction.

Here it was most instructive to observe the method of handling radium—always wearing rubber gloves—long forceps are used to place the Radium in specially shaped silver or gold cases, or screens, according to the character of the case, and these are finally fitted and stitched into rubber tubes before being applied to the patient.

After leaving the Theatre, we were then conducted round the Wards, and Private Rooms. The colour scheme of the decorations generally is ivory and blue, and a particularly dainty patterned chintz in these colours is in use for the screens and bedspreads.

An outstanding feature of this beautiful hospital is the large wide windows everywhere, in the wards large bays, the length of the room and almost to the floor, and as the patients remarked, "it was a joy to look out to the garden and beyond, to see pleasant roadway and watch the passers-by." A charming garden of lawn and shrubberies surrounds the buildings.

The basement has been converted into various departments: the Pathological Laboratory, with every necessity for the work, the staff china cupboard, the Matron's stores, leading to the linen cupboard, then the staff dining-room, tastefully furnished with dark oak; the orange table mats and Wedgwood blue china make a charming contrast,

and, finally, the kitchen with the maids' sitting-room adjoining.

The Out-Patients' Department, a fine large apartment with basins inset with hot and cold water, cubicles provided for dressing and undressing, a department for examination curtained off, and every modern convenience; the decorations cream colour; splendidly lighted by large low windows looking on to the garden, with white tiled sills.

The Out-Patient Department is a special diagnostic and follow-up clinic, in connection with the research work. The patients attend by appointment and each visit requires a detailed physical examination. The follow-up system entails the continued attendance of each patient, which means ever increasing yearly attendance of the same out-patients.

Then we noted the Mortuary Chapel, looking on to the garden, very cleverly converted from what had once been the wine and coal cellar.

We then passed into the property adjoining the Hospital, The Elizabeth Courtauld Wing, recently acquired by the management. This spacious house provides accommodation for the new X-Ray Department, increased accommodation for three patients, wards or private rooms, and extra staff quarters.

Here the common room for the nursing staff was particularly bright with a verandah looking to the tennis lawn, and where the colour scheme of white and blue still so charmingly prevailed; a feature of interest was the dado of linoleum in these colours. The sisters' sitting-room had a real sense of comfort; a very magnificent Chesterfield, a gift from a member of the committee, was admired.

On the first floor was a ward of six beds, another wonderfully beautiful room. The small upper panes of the large bay window attracted some interest, as they represented, in stained glass, coats of arms, etc., dated 1634.

What was originally the billiard room has been converted into the X-Ray Department which consists of a consulting room, dressing cubicles, and two lead lined treatment rooms. Between these there is a control room, equipped with special windows, through which the operators can watch the patients and avoid being harmed by the rays.

In the Record Room we noted a plaque, inscribed with the words: "The X-Ray apparatus for deep therapy was the gift of the trustees of the late Sir John Howard."

The Marie Curie Hospital provides accommodation for 31 general ward patients, eight private patients, the largest one containing 15 beds, the private wards, 3 double-bedded rooms, and two single rooms, most tastefully furnished in limed oak. In addition there are the staff bedrooms, in which we noted that the equipment provided inset basins with hot and cold water, the furnishing giving home-like comfort.

We noted the Devon Bed with special interest, endowed by Devonians for the free treatment of Devon women. When performing the dedicatory service on February 2nd, 1932, the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Exeter, eloquently said: To those unversed in the mystery of medical science the power of radium seemed little short of a miracle. He remembered the time when not only radium but X-Rays were unknown, and he had watched the gradual extension of scientific knowledge which was altering our world and our conceptions so entirely that to be a materialist now was to be one of those who had not kept pace with modern science. The more science revealed its wonders the more materialism must depart from men's minds. Whatever the realities of life were, they were not material. The mysterious revelations of these truths showed that there were beyond this world greater efforts and greater thoughts than human minds had grasped. These discoveries had been spoken of to-day as partly the result of imagination. He thought a better description would be inspiration. The Bishop then referred to the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)