

## The Nursing Record "At Homes."

MISS NORMAN AT THE ROYAL VICTORIA  
HOSPITAL, NETLEY.

NETLEY, the Crimean War, and the Queen are ideas closely associated in the minds of many people, but few have any adequate conception why they connect them, and fewer still what Netley Hospital, or more correctly The Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, is like, and what its *raison d'être* really is.

It is now about 38 years since peace was declared after the Crimean War. If that terrible struggle resulted in little else, it led directly to the erection of a Hospital in some way worthy of the British Army, where our soldiers can be looked after in times of peace as well as war. Hundreds of poor fellows came back to England with mutilated limbs, and with constitutions shattered for life. It was therefore hailed with great enthusiasm when the Queen showed her sympathy for their sufferings by laying the foundation stone of the noble building which now beautifies the borders of Southampton Water. These are the words cut on the famous stone:—"This stone was laid on the 19th day of May in the year of our Lord 1856, by her most gracious Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, to be the foundation stone of a Military Hospital for the reception of the sick and wounded soldiers of her army."

On one of the brightest of bright days in spring, writes our representative, I visited Netley Hospital quite unaware of its beautiful position, and, therefore, little prepared for a surprise. The visitor leaving Netley Station, and asking his way to the Hospital, will most likely be directed by an undeniably one-time soldier to take the first lane to the left which leads right into the grounds. Through the trees glimpses can be caught of a fine building ahead; to the right and left furze bushes are ablaze with golden blossoms, the grass is as green as it ought to be, and the soldier coming along in a red coat reminds you that you are in the neighbourhood of military life. Suddenly there bursts upon the view a palatial building of red brick faced with white stone, standing only a few yards off from the very edge of Southampton water, whilst away beyond that can be seen a strip of the Isle of Wight. Men, picturesquely dressed in light blue flannel suits, wander about the grounds evidently enjoying the sunshine. After some diffi-

culty the Lady Superintendent's apartments are at last reached, and a bright cheerful-looking maid ushers one into a sunny drawing-room, at once evidencing the fact that its owner has travelled, and made good use of her opportunities to pick up knick-knacks of Oriental art. But Miss Norman has entered, dressed in black, and looking the picture of health. After a short greeting we settle ourselves in the window for a chat.

"Yes," said Miss Norman, "the Hospital is beautifully situated, and it is very healthy. All the staff declare that they never feel better than when here at work; it is said that the Queen chose the site; at any rate, scarcely a better choice could have been made, for it is very convenient, being only twelve miles from Portsmouth, six from Southampton, and within easy distance of Aldershot and London. The railway station is not far off, but there was a suggestion of extending the lines into the grounds close to the building. However, I don't know that had it been carried out it would have been such a great acquisition at present."

"Why?"

"Well, the patients who come here are not, as a rule, dangerously ill; they suffer more from chronic than from acute diseases. In a way this is a sort of huge convalescent home for military men; of course, in time of war it would be different. In the army a man is either fit for service or he is not, and if it is deemed well by the medical officer in charge of his station, that he lie up for a time, he is sent to Hospital. Most of our patients are those who want recruiting in health after a spell of foreign service. We expect soon to be busy when the troopships come home, for the medical officers prefer to send their patients from the tropics after the severity of the English winter is over."

"They must enjoy being here very much; I'm sure it is worth while being ill,—not too ill of course."

"Yes after they are able to be up. They group together, spin yarns, perhaps do a little knitting or fancy work, that is if they know how. Once a fortnight I get up concerts which they enjoy immensely, Chevalier's coster songs being in high favour, or indeed anything of a cheerful nature. But poor fellows' inactivity palls on them after a time, and they long to get back to their regiment, and to their old companions."

"I did not see many Nurses when passing through the building, not that that indicates much, but I hope you are not over-worked?"

"Not at all; pray don't go away labouring under any misapprehension; the uninitiated are apt to be misled. Intelligent and capable men are enlisted,

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