

Annotations.

"TOMMY ON THE TAPIS."

WE are glad to observe that members of Parliament are extracting a little (not much) information concerning the arrangements for sick soldiers from Mr. Brodrick, the Under-Secretary of State for War.

Captain Norton asked lately in the House of Commons whether the right hon. gentleman was aware that the Soldiers' Convalescent Home at Eastbourne is situated in what is considered the most unhealthy part of the town; what sick diets, extras, and comforts were provided for the patients, and who nursed and attended to them; and who did the greater part of the necessary work in connection with the Home.

Mr. Brodrick, in reply, said that the sanitary condition of the vicinity of the Convalescent Home at Eastbourne is considered good. The diets, extras, and medical comforts are similar to those of all Military Hospitals. The staff consists of an Army Medical Officer and a non-commissioned officer and two men of the Medical Staff Corps, who carry out all the duties connected with the care and treatment of the sick, and the necessary work connected with the Home. Such patients as may be considered able to aid the establishment are, at the discretion of the Medical Officer, employed on light hospital duties.

Which admits that there is no nursing Sister on duty at the Soldiers' Convalescent Home, as there should be if the nursing and domestic management is to be efficient.

The *Daily Mail* is also doing good work in bringing to the notice of the public the fact that many of our veteran soldiers, amongst them many who have been decorated with medals, are spending the last years of their lives in workhouses and infirmaries. Surely this is a grave slur on the present War Office arrangements, and one which it would be well for the nation to intimate will be no longer tolerated.

STATE *versus* VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS.

THE Governors of the London Hospital have regretfully decided that the medicines and surgical dressings, which up to the present have been supplied gratis, must be charged for at the rate of 3d. for each patient. No charge will be made to children under fifteen, nor yet

to persons presenting a letter of introduction to a member of the hospital staff from an outside doctor. The fact that the expenditure during the two past years has exceeded the income by £30,000, is the reason for the new policy. We regret that this the largest hospital in the United Kingdom, and in the very poorest district, has felt compelled to adopt this system of payment by out-patients, and that it can no longer write itself "free," mainly because each voluntary hospital which adopts payment—however inadequate in return for services rendered—is putting a nail in the coffin of voluntary charity. It is the thin edge of the wedge which will ultimately open the door to State supported hospitals for the very poor, and Pay hospitals for those who can afford to pay a graduated fee. Indeed, the great Poor Law Infirmaries are, step by step, following close at the heels of the great voluntary hospitals, and we do not like Poor Law Government on its present basis.

"MORE MIDDLESEX METHODS."

It is a serious question of how far the general hospitals of London have a right to close their doors to the sick poor in the immediate neighbourhood, and it is with a feeling of dismay that the inhabitants of the densely-populated and poor district surrounding Middlesex Hospital have just learned of the intention of the hospital authorities to entirely close it from July 17th until September 19th inclusive (a period of nine weeks), this being, perhaps, the very portion of the year when the hospital is most required. Even the dispensing of medicines is to cease. In our opinion the Committee of the Middlesex Hospital have absolutely no excuse for this disregard of the needs of the poor, and we know of no other hospital which enforces this hardship upon them. If cleaning and painting is necessary this should certainly not be attempted in every ward at the same time, but one ward should be dismantled at a time, and the patients cared for in another part of the institution. This system is adopted at St. Bartholomew's and the London Hospitals, and no doubt in all institutions where the patients are the first consideration of the authorities; and it would be well if the subscribers to the Middlesex Hospital would intimate to the Committee that this annual and extremely long period of closing is neither necessary nor humane.

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