

The Hospital World.

THE POPLAR AND STEPNEY SICK ASYLUM.

A SHORT journey from Fenchurch Street to Bromley, brings one to the doors of the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, one of the Metropolitan Poor Law Infirmaries which has a reputation for possessing an excellent nurse-training school. The reason is not far to seek. The able Matron, and the Medical Superintendent, work in the most cordial agreement, combining in their efforts to further the efficiency of the Infirmary and the excellence of the nurse-training school. The result is evident in the high tone and good discipline which prevail throughout the building, and in the quiet, professional appearance of the nurses. When it is remembered that six years ago, in this great infirmary of 750 beds, there was, besides the Matron, only *one* trained nurse—the Night Superintendent—it will be realized that an enormous amount of work has been accomplished. Now there are two Assistant Matrons, the wards are in the charge of thoroughly efficient Sisters, and the nursing staff numbers 88. Besides their practical work in the wards, systematic theoretical instruction is given to the pupils in their second and third years. Thus, in January, 1901, the Matron will begin a course of lectures on Practical Nursing to all probationers who entered the school between January and December, 1900; and later, the Medical Superintendent, Dr. Spurrell, lectures on Surgery, and one of the Resident Medical Officers on Medicine, while the Assistant Matrons also take classes, helping the nurses with their notes of the lectures, and giving instruction in elementary Anatomy and Physiology, as well as in Bandaging and Splint-Padding, and practical classes in sick-room cookery have recently been established. At the end of their three years' training, the examination is conducted by a member of the Medical Staff of the London Hospital, the authorities wisely considering that the examiner should be unconnected with the institution. When one learns how much pains is taken with the education of the nurses, it is not surprising to hear that, since the first year of the establishment of the training school, the Matron has never had to advertise for probationers, and that the number of applicants is largely and increasingly in excess of the vacancies. Comprehensive registers are kept of the nurses' training and general qualifications, covering not only the period of their connection with the infirmary, but their subsequent appointments. Comfortable quarters are provided for the nurses, most of the bedrooms being single ones, while those which have two beds are divided by a screen. The recreation

of the nurses is also considered, and a tennis court and croquet lawn provided. There is also a library of standard books provided for the use of the nursing staff. In the wards alertness and order prevail, the same systematic book-keeping which characterises the Matron's office being carried out in the wards. Both day and night nurses keep a written report, the latter being signed by the Night Superintendent on each of her visits. Lists of all linen at the laundry, and that returned, are also booked. The temperature of the wards is charted every four hours, and the charts go down each week to the Matron's office. It is noteworthy that all poisons and stimulants are kept under lock and key, the only persons who have keys of the poison cupboards being the Matron, the Ward Sister, and the Medical Superintendent. No nurse, until she is fully certificated, is allowed to measure a dose of a poisonous drug except in the presence of a witness, so that the danger of an accident is reduced to a minimum. It may be mentioned, in passing, that both the Matron and the Medical Superintendent would most warmly welcome gifts of flowers, or, better still, of plants in pots for the wards. Any donors may be assured that gifts of growing plants would receive every care.

In the kitchens of the wards are larders and linen cupboards, both of which are included by the Matron in her daily inspection. When it is remembered that in this big institution every one of the 750 patients is clothed from head to foot, even to his pocket-handkerchiefs, it will be seen that the care of the linen is no sinecure. Every four months the Matron takes stock of it, each article coming under her personal inspection.

The operating-theatre is a credit to all concerned, more especially when one knows that it was not built for its present purpose. It is furnished in a most up-to-date manner. Specially noticeable is the instrument-cupboard, with glass shelves, fixed at a slight angle, so that the instruments are readily visible. A table, with glass slab, for the anæsthetist, designed by Dr. Spurrell, is worthy of minute attention. It holds not only the necessary apparatus for the various anæsthetics and the anæsthetics themselves, but everything that is likely to be needed in case of emergency. It is the handiest table for the purpose I have ever seen. Space fails me to do more than mention the great kitchen, where cooking for 850 persons is done daily, the laundry, soon to be replaced by one of modern type, the laboratory, the mortuary, and the chapel. Throughout the building the same care is evinced to maintain the highest possible standard, and to work for improvements where improvements are needed.

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