

The Hospital World.

THE NORTH-EASTERN CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

Far away east, down the Hackney Road, stands the North-Eastern Hospital for Children, an admirable institution, which, with its 57 beds, serves a constituency of a quarter of a million children. No wonder that children are often turned away for want of room, that convalescents are discharged at the earliest possible moment, and that at the annual meeting held at the hospital on Friday in last week, under the presidency of the Rev. W. G. Marcom, the urgent need of increased accommodation was anxiously discussed.

The Chairman, as an East End clergyman, speaking of the boon which trained nurses conferred on his parishioners, related that one of these had told him how, after tossing about all night on a sick bed, the loving touch of a kindly nurse as she tended her in the morning was "like heaven," and he was quite sure that the children, if they could voice their opinions, would say the same.

Mr. Walter Johnson, J.P., said that at the present time it was specially necessary that publicity should be given to their needs. The Committee have now before them an extensive scheme for necessary enlargement and improvements, which will cost £40,000. After securing the freehold of the land required for the purpose, they have in hand the sum of £10,000. They have, therefore, to look forward not only to raising the £30,000 still required, but also to the permanent increased expenditure of an additional £3,000 a year on maintenance.

Mr. Wilkinson, who described himself as a working man living in the district, said that he would like to say how he personally could testify to the good work done by the hospital. Mr. Charles J. Port, in moving a vote of thanks to the officials, the medical staff and the hard-working secretary, Mr. T. Glenton-Kerr, included the Matron, Miss E. W. Curno, and the nursing staff in this vote. It indeed seems particularly appropriate this year, for it will be remembered that it was at this hospital that the nurses rendered speedy and efficient aid in extinguishing a fire, which, had it not been got under, must have endangered not only the lives of the patients, but also the fabric of the building. It is easy, when on the spot, to realize what was effected by the nurses by their prompt action. Opposite to the hospital, on the other side of a narrow street, flames were issuing from a house adjoining an undertaker's on one side, and a timber-merchant's, with a wood yard, at the back on the other. The flames, which were observed by a night nurse,

were coming across the street. If the wood yard had caught fire, nothing could probably have saved the hospital. The nurses, however, played on the flames with the fire hose from the hospital windows with such good effect that by the time the engines arrived, some twenty minutes later, they had got the fire under.

The hospital contains two large wards, one medical, and one surgical, for the reception of patients, besides one or two small wards. It is plain, on going round them, to see how much it is needed. Every case almost seems acute—meningitis, pneumonia, peritonitis, mastoid abscess, a bad burn; these are a few of the cases which fill the beds. Of the children, many are but babies, and one of these put out his arms in a most confiding manner to be taken up and made much of, as one went up to his cot, after which he gleefully insisted upon a game of ball. One was struck once more by the fact, so noticeable in a well-managed children's ward, that the "pretty ways" and endearing habits of children are not so much a matter of individuality as of education. Children who are most unattractive when first admitted, speedily develop the loving and happy manners which make them the pets of the whole ward. One ponders at times over the transformation. Is it the imitative faculty which causes it, the good manners taught insensibly by the nursing staff and the more fortunate children, or is it that when they are placed in congenial surroundings the stunted and repressed natures respond as a flower does to the sunshine. Suspicion is changed into the natural confidence of childhood, the affection bestowed on these poor mites begets a response most touching to see, and the little patient, often prematurely old, becomes a child once more, with all the winsomeness and attractiveness of childhood. There are few pleasanter sights than the happiness of children, gathered in, in many instances, from unhappy homes, in the wards of a children's hospital, and it is evident that the North-Eastern Hospital is one of these havens of rest, and humanizing centres, for the little folk of the East End. Lastly must be mentioned the flat roof which, securely railed in, affords a pleasant playground for convalescents and a means whereby those children who can be moved can obtain the fresh air so needful to their recovery. The boon of this open space to pent up London children must be immense. But, alas, the demands on the hospital beds are many, and all too soon the convalescent patients must "move on" to make room for newer and more urgent cases. If the wealthy in the West End of this great city could realize the needs of this East End-charity, funds would assuredly pour into its coffer.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)