

Experience proves that in the out-patient department, where the air is inevitably fouled, the halls can be kept quite inoffensive, and when empty a few minutes are sufficient to restore a perfectly pure atmosphere. In the wards not a vestige of offensive smell is apparent; indeed, in the surgical wards I noted the absence of the usual mixture of pungent chemical odours, and in the kitchens, though visited soon after the dinners had been distributed, the absence of that peculiar odour—a combination of warm fat, gas and humanity—was conspicuous by its absence.

Of course the Plenum system has its objectors—no bright open fires, no sportive gusts of fresh air, delightful, if dust-laden; but its supporters claim that it provides an equable ventilation of pure, fresh air, kept at an even temperature night and day, summer and winter, and I am bound to say science appears to be on their side. But we are a prejudiced people—we are used to coal fires, draughts, dust, and other undesirable details, and if they are taken away from us our legitimate right is “to go to weep and howl.”

#### THE DOMESTIC DEPARTMENT.

The Domestic and Dietary Department at the “General” is, without exception, the very best I have ever seen at any hospital, not excepting those attached to the German hospitals in Berlin—happy hunting grounds of the most domesticated women in the world. By lift one is taken to the top of the building, and here imagine a grand space divided up into every section necessary for domestic use—first a large airy kitchen, white tiled, and fitted with every necessary appliance for cooking by gas and steam—opening out of it through doorless archways, are serving rooms and sculleries (made possible by the unique ventilating system). On one side of a wide passage doors open into rooms tiled to the ceiling, some ventilated through fine wire from without, one where fresh meat is hung, the next day's supply suspended on hooks and slabs, the next where the day's supply of new bread was neatly piled on open wooden racks, and the milk tested and carefully kept, a third containing the cleaning stores, all neatly arranged on wooden racks—here soap, economically cut ready for use, packets of that blessed “Hudson,” and various other stores which are used to keep wholesome hearth and home. A large apartment at the end of the passage contained groceries and food stores, all arranged with the utmost precision—flour, grain, sugar, &c., in various bins; above on racks are stacked jams, pickles, and other condiments, and boxes of eggs of various ages, French and English, hundreds of which indispensable articles of food are consumed weekly in the hospital.

With such a well-organised housewifery department there should not be, and we heard there was not, any difficulty in providing a most satisfactory dietary both for patients and the resident medical

and nursing staffs. No steward is employed; the Matron and her Assistant are responsible for the hospital catering, and the makers of this fine hospital have done well in providing them with such admirably arranged domestic offices. I always maintain that the nursing of the sick is primarily a domestic science, and too much care cannot be bestowed by builders of hospitals and kindred institutions in perfecting in every practical detail this all-essential section.

#### THE OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENT.

It was greatly owing to the intelligent interest taken in the matter by Mr. Gilbert Barling, one of the senior surgeons to the hospital, that the Out-patient Department was designed on its practical plan, with a fine central waiting hall, embellished with delicately-tinted faience ware above a richly glazed majolica dado, from which branch off the various special rooms, where the physicians and surgeons can attend to their own patients, and where very complete arrangements have been made for giving the best expert examination to classified diseases. This plan has now been very generally adopted by architects in constructing the out-patient departments of new hospitals.

#### THE NURSES' HOME.

Passing through a large glass-covered winter garden, a gift of Sir John Holder, the financial father of the hospital, one finds oneself in the Nurses' Home, which contains sitting and study rooms and bedrooms for over 100 nurses. Here cheery fires are provided in the dwelling rooms, on the ground floor. Every nurse has her own little bedroom, with character writ large in the personal arrangement of each. Photographs and flowers gave a homely touch, and all were very tidy and well kept.

The Nursing School is a flourishing one and the provisions just. The usual term is a three years' course, with lectures, examinations, and certificate. The probationers pay an entrance fee of 20 guineas, and, when desirable, candidates who are unable to afford this fee are required to remain in the hospital for a fourth year, and thus, as it were, give in skilled service what they have not paid in cash. The physique of the nurses appeared above the average. A height and weight standard is compulsory, the latter sometimes a difficulty, but the medical examiner has discretion, and there is no difficulty in getting an ample supply of candidates to fill the vacancies on the nursing staff. The hospital is fortunate in possessing a House Governor who has devoted years of arduous work to the institution, who knows every stick and stone of the building, and who is looked upon as a species of hospital encyclopædia by committee and staff, by whom he is appreciated as a very valuable officer.

Of Miss M. E. Jones, the Matron, her colleagues know her to be an untiring worker, and a woman

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)