

The Hospital World.

THE MEDICAL MISSION HOSPITAL, PLAISTOW E.

By Miss M. L. DARLING.

Eastward of the East-End, hidden away among wharfs and warehouses and innumerable monotonous streets, there has existed since the year 1888 in the heart of "Old" Canning Town an unpretentious dispensary to which day by day flock numbers of women and children from the whole region round about; and week by week, on Thursday evenings, troops of factory girls from the immediate neighbourhood and from further afield, from Poplar, Silvertown, and Tidal Basin.

As an outgrowth of this busy dispensary there was started in 1894 a small temporary hospital at 538-540, Barking Road. A few years later the present building was opened.

It is called "The Medical Mission Hospital in connection with the Canning Town Women's Settlement," and is situated in Balaam Street, the only desirable site available at the time.

Not far off, St. Mary's Hospital, started in connection with the well-known church, St. Mary's, Plaistow, has carried on its very valuable work for many years; but though so near one another, the work of the two institutions does not overlap, for St. Mary's patients are from populous Plaistow, and the Medical Mission Hospital draws its patients chiefly from crowded Canning Town.

The little hospital was opened on October 16th, and its "birthday" has since been celebrated year by year as a "Gift Day."

Weeks beforehand the Matron and staff are busy in their so-called leisure moments sending circulars and writing to their friends on behalf of the hospital. Circulars are also posted to old patients and are placarded up in the neighbourhood.

When Gift Day finally arrives the little hospital presents a gay appearance. Flags and lanterns, kindly lent by one of our best known steamship companies, adorn the entrance, and the corridors and various rooms on the ground floor are soon piled high with a multitudinous array of gifts—groceries, nursing appliances, ward linen, fruit, flowers, toys, all carefully entered in a book against the donor's name, are skilfully displayed on stalls erected for the occasion.

Meanwhile the visitors, having presented their offering, are conducted round the hospital. Ex-patients abound, and are the most generous and most delighted to revisit their former temporary residence.

Little children come, shyly, and clasping a screw of paper containing some pink or pale

blue ribbon as their gift, or a little bunch of flowers. Thrifty housewives arrive, and proudly present home-made jam. (There are thrifty housewives even in the region eastward of the East-End.)

Not only on Gift Day, and when the entrance is gay with flags and the staff is awaiting their arrival, do visitors find their way to the Balaam Street Hospital. I am not speaking of the many who, having heard of the excellent work done by the Settlement, or being interested in hospitals, come to visit us. These are always welcome, are shown over the institution, and seldom leave without expressing their approval of the pretty wards and the up-to-date appointments. It is not of these visitors I would speak. It is a frequent sight on Sunday morning to see seated on the bench in the patients' entrance two somewhat pathetic little figures, albeit with very sharp expectant little faces—Alec and Rosie, ex-typhoid cases, and the most grateful patients that ever were.

For hours they will wait, even after refreshments—which are scarce at home—have been provided, until they have seen *all* the members of the hospital staff with whom they are acquainted. Then suddenly they arise, reluctantly, and hand in hand wander off again.

Perhaps Alec's gratitude is accentuated by the remembrance that it was through the hospital the dream of his life was fulfilled. He saw a Christmas-tree!

"Nurse," he whispered to his night nurse during his early convalescence, "I wishes I could take them toys what Matron gave me home." (A few broken toys.) "'Cause then I could put 'em in my Christmas stocking. I allus hangs up my stocking, but I never finds nought in 'em!"—a long sigh and a visionary look upwards. "It would be not 'alf nice to see a Christmas-tree!"

AN IRISH JAUNT.

On June 8th the members of the Irish Nurses' Association made an excursion to Lucan. By kind invitation of Miss Reeves and Miss Golding they were entertained to tea at "The Lodge." There was a very merry gathering. After tea Captain Vesey's demesne was visited, also the salmon leap, and lovely bouquets of wild flowers, now in such exquisite profusion in Ireland, were gathered and taken home as a memento of a most delightful afternoon. What wise nurse was it who said that nurses must not only work together, but play together. It is thus they come into happy and sympathetic social relations—all the better for professional co-operation.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)