

## THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

### ESSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL, COLCHESTER.

One of the things which frequently impresses a Londoner when visiting a provincial hospital is the spaciousness of its surroundings, and this is the case with the Essex County Hospital, Colchester, which—though most accessible to patients, for the tram cars to and from the town constantly pass its gates—is most excellently placed on rising ground, well back from the road, so that quiet is ensured. A wide carriage drive sweeps up to its imposing portico on either side, and a wide-spreading lawn slopes down to the road, giving the Hospital as one approaches it the dignified appearance of a country mansion.

I was met at the door by the Matron, Miss W. M. Bickham and under her guidance went round the institution. The hospital contains 100 beds, and, as the total cost of maintenance and administration last year was only £5,629 5s. 2d., it is evident that the money of subscribers and donors is laid out to the very best advantage. It is, therefore, sad to learn from its Annual Report that the total ordinary income last year was only £4,017 3s. 9d., and of this amount only £1,646 19s. 8d. came from subscriptions and donations. Although the hospital bears the name of the County in which it is situated it would seem that the County does not take its responsibilities very seriously, and the committee which administers the funds and the permanent staff must have continual anxiety to keep down expenses, and to combine efficiency with strict economy. The hospital awaits the donor, or donors who will give the committee, which has the desire, the means to improve it structurally.

The newest ward is the children's, which is spacious, airy and pleasant, and flooded with fresh air and sunshine. Indeed, an abundance of these primary needs of the sick is a notable feature in all the wards, the freshness throughout the whole building being very marked. Many of the patients were out in the garden in their beds, their removal being made comparatively easy by an ingenious contrivance of local design, by means of which any bedstead can be easily wheeled along at will, and which can readily be transferred from one bedstead to another, as required.

In connection with the children's annexe, the architect, contrary to the practice of most of his confrères, who seldom seem to learn wisdom in this respect, has provided ample cupboard room—for coals, for linen, for stores, for food, even for the children's toys. They must be the joy of both the matron and the ward sister.



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A wide verandah runs the entire length of the ward on one side, and here some of the children are nursed day and night.

Most of the general wards are shaped like the letter L, which permits a greater classification of the cases than is possible in a long ward; there are also a few private wards.

A practical article in use in the hospital is an aluminium bed-pan, which I was told is very satisfactory. It is in two portions, the top being easily removable, leaving a pan much the shape of an ordinary basin, which can be easily and thoroughly cleansed. The necessity for the unsatisfactory tubular handle is thus obviated. It is light, unbreakable, and comfortable, so that it should have a useful future.

The operating theatre, which is modern and well equipped, is in charge of a theatre sister

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