

REFLECTIONS,

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.

We are glad to hear that every encouragement has been given to the promoters of the Grand Bazaar to be held in the Chiswick Town Hall on May 8th and 9th, in aid of the West London Hospital, to which we referred last week, generous offers of help coming from all quarters. The fact that Her Majesty Queen Amélie of Portugal has graciously consented to open the Bazaar on May 8th means assured success. The West London Hospital is the handiest to nearly a million people and its 160 beds are totally inadequate, it is the most economically worked hospital of its kind in London. The hospital is in great need of funds and the Bazaar Committee have every hope of being able to hand over a substantial sum as the result of their effort.

Sir James Porter, Medical Director-General of the Navy, announced on the 8th inst., at the West London Medico-Chirurgical Society's dinner, that in the last few days the contracts had come in for the first hospital ship in the world—to be built for hospital purposes.

The authorities had at last come to the conclusion, long ago reached by the medical profession, that such a ship was necessary. Great thought had been bestowed on the matter by doctors, sailors and naval constructors, and in eighteen months the ship would be in being.

It is reported that the new vessel will have accommodation for 330 patients in war and 260 in peace, and a permanent staff of eight medical officers and forty male nurses. In all the hospital arrangements the ship will be perfectly up-to-date. There will be two large operating rooms and two extensive preparation rooms adjoining; a special ophthalmic dark room, a dental room, a special laboratory for bacteriological tests, an elaborately-fitted X-ray room, isolating wards, and a magnificently-equipped dispensary, all of which will be inter-connected by telephone. The cots will all be made to swing with the motion of the ship, so as to preserve the equilibrium as much as possible. Ten of the beds will be specially constructed with firmer bottom and somewhat larger, for the use of patients with fractured thighs and other injuries, which require a specially stable bed.

We hope some expert nursing opinion has been invited as to domestic and ward facilities. Cupboards may appear very unimportant items—but for lack of them the whole comfort of a hospital has suffered. Cupboards are but one item in the domestic arrangements of any place to be arranged for human habitation, on which women could give most helpful advice to the medical department at the Admiralty.

It is also to be hoped that women members of Queen Alexandra's Naval Nursing Service will form part of the staff of all hospital ships.

THE PASSING OF GENIUS.

The death of Lord Lister, O.M., F.R.S., at 84 years of age recalls to mind the enormous debt which the sick, as well as the world of science, the profession of medicine, and indirectly the profession of nursing, owe to his genius. Wounds and operations are now shorn of the greater part of their danger. Hospitals, instead of being death traps, are now the safest places in which to be ill; medicine ranks as a scientific profession, and daily it is increasingly recognized that to render effective aid, to be a help and not a danger to the sick, nurses also must be taught the scientific principles underlying the practice of their art, and must conscientiously and exactly carry them out.

There are those amongst us who well remember the fetish of "puffing Billy"—the antiseptic spray—and the unmoved way in which some of the older-fashioned surgeons insisted that cleanliness was the essential. But the antiseptic methods advocated by Lister, based on the theory of destroying any bacteria which might be present during the dressing of a wound, were an immense step in advance, preparing the way for the adoption of those aseptic methods which are commended by their simplicity and which aim at keeping the tissues free from bacteria instead of destroying them when present. In short, to keep a wound surgically clean.

LEGAL MATTERS.

A PROBATIONER'S RIGHTS.

An interesting case is pending, in which a nurse, Miss Fisher, has, through her solicitors, informed the Plymouth Board of Guardians that unless some compensation is offered her for dismissing her at the end of two and a half year's training she will have no alternative but to institute proceedings. The Board nominated their Clerk as their solicitor to accept service on their behalf.

The circumstances were that Miss Fisher was appointed to remain in the service of the Board for three years subject to the rules and regulations of the incorporation. Her agreement with the Guardians was that they might require a probationer to resign at any time in case of inefficiency, neglect or unsuitability for the duties required of her unless the probationer was found guilty of grave misconduct, when the Board might summarily determine the engagement. Miss Fisher felt compelled to tender her resignation on September 18th, but the Board refused to release her from her agreement, so it is obvious that up to that time there had been nothing of which the Guardians could complain. On December 16th she was requested to resign, and, as she declined to do so, her engagement was terminated without any cause being assigned.

It will be interesting to know whether a probationer has any legal rights in such circumstances.

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