

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

THE ROYAL VICTORIA INFIRMARY, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

When visiting an important city for the first time one naturally asks, "For what is this place famous?" The reply may be, "Oh! ships—or shoes—or sealing-wax," as the case may be, but when the advice is added, "You must see our magnificent new Infirmary," one may rely upon it that the folks in that particular city are all right. A great town without a magnificent *new* Infirmary has failed in civic enterprise and duty, and lacks enlightened appreciation of the value of medicine as an adjunct to sanitary science. It also lacks appreciation of the magic restorative value to health of skilled and comfortable nursing.

I recently spent two days in that ancient and virile city Newcastle-on-Tyne, and, conducted by the matron, Miss L. Wilson Wamsley, had the privilege of inspecting the splendid new Victoria Infirmary, finely placed on Town Moor land, and which crowns the site as a perpetual reminder to coming generations of Tyneside folk that the best only was considered good enough for their needs and service when its stone was laid and its portals opened by the kindest and most sympathetic of Kings. The Victoria Infirmary is indeed beautifully situated, and is surrounded by fine, well-kept grounds. The approach is stately, and dignity is lent to the whole institution by the well-placed and most lovely statue, in pure white marble, of Queen Victoria by Frampton, a young and gracious Queen—as all Queens should for ever remain.

The exterior of the administrative block and the various pavilions are somewhat severe in style, but upon entrance one soon realises that the lordly sum which was expended in the erection and decoration of the hospital has been expended to the very best purpose within. How really artistic and beautiful is the inner entrance hall! With its stamped leather walls and fine woodwork, the staircase and gallery leading to the Board room above, give a baronial air which is not at all out of place in this magnificent municipal building. It is fine—and the People's Palace of Recovery should be fine. Corridors to right and left lead to handsome official apartments, and the Matron's sitting-room—softly toned within, a fine view without—is a tranquil place, and must be a delightful retreat to rest in, if the busy Matron of so well-ordered an institution ever finds time to rest.

The hospital, which contains 430 beds, is the ideal size to manage—not too large to

keep in human touch with all within. It is possible for a Superintendent to keep in constant communication with the heads of all departments—nursing, domestic, and clerical; most important of all, the wards can be constantly visited, the work of Sisters and nurses seen and appreciated, and a personal judgment—apart from reports useful in their place—formed of the practical work of those in training. Needless to say, the wards of the Victoria Infirmary are scientifically constructed and beautifully appointed. They are spacious, light, airy, and comfortable, and evidently very well cared for. Polished floors and wooden lockers I consider hygienically defective, and they add greatly to the cost of labour, but they are very harmonious, for which let us be thankful! So speckless was the whole institution—corridors, wards, annexes—that I ventured to ask:

"Is Newcastle *really* a dirty place?"

The emphatic reply, "Oh! indeed *yes!*" still left a lurking suspicion in my mind that the floating smuts of this industrial centre did not venture to intrude into the privacy of the people's place of healing.

For veritably the Victoria Infirmary belongs to the people, and they are evidently vastly proud of it. Turn to the balance-sheet, and you will find that the Workmen's Contributions last year amounted to the grand total of £18,850 10s. out of an income of £37,985 5s. 3½d., which proves how greatly they value its benefits. The Committee state in their report that they cannot speak too approvingly of the appreciation of the work of the Infirmary which is represented in these figures, and in thanking the many thousands of contributors, emphasise that acknowledgment is again due in respect of the large number of workmen's representatives, colliery and works officials, who kindly act as honorary agents in collecting and forwarding the contributions.

On the other hand, for so wealthy a city as Newcastle it does not strike me that those who are so fortunately placed as not to require the hospital's help contribute quite as generously as they might do!

The Nurses' Home is worthy of the Infirmary, and its approach through the lovely winter garden must be a daily delight to the nursing staff passing to and fro. The glass corridor and domed conservatory were gay with flowers, ferns, and creepers, and the gardener, I learned, takes a very special pride in its care. Each Sister and Nurse has her own charming little bedroom, and there are large and very prettily furnished rooms for recreation and study. From the latter one can step into the

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