

THE BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN.

A most charming hospital on the outskirts of Birmingham is the Birmingham and Midland Hospital for Women, Sparkhill, which, during the Matronship of Miss K. E. Richmond—which has extended over seventeen years—has increased its beds from about twenty to close on a hundred, and still the accommodation is insufficient for the needs of the city.

The hospital, which is set on the edge of the country, in Showell Green Lane, is a low, long handsome building, the main entrance to which, in the centre of the administration block, is supported on marble pillars, the name of the hospital being inscribed over the portico in bold relief. Beyond the hospital proper is the Nurses' Home; but the Matron's office and sitting-room, as is right, are in the centre of the administration block, the former on the ground floor, the latter just over the main entrance.

Here let it be said that the Committee are fortunate, indeed, in their Matron. Miss Richmond was trained at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and has since had a wide and probably unique experience in the special branch of work with which she has for so long been associated. Last year there were 1,272 admissions to the hospital, and 1,201 operations were performed, 645 involving abdominal section—a sufficient indication of the responsibility of the person left in charge between the visits of the operating surgeons. Yet it was only last year that a house surgeon was appointed; and referring to this at the annual meeting, Mr. Christopher Martin, a member of the medical staff, said that this relieved Miss Richmond of some of the responsibility which was formerly put upon her. She had practically acted as their House Surgeon, and acted most skilfully, but they were putting a very unfair responsibility upon her in asking her to do that work.

The work of the hospital is associated with that of the Maternity Hospital in the city, and as Mr. J. S. Nettlefold pointed out at the same meeting, the complete organization now comprises the Women's Hospital, the Maternity Hospital, the midwifery work in the city, the education of doctors and midwives, two Convalescent Homes, and the Taylor Memorial Home of Rest, and yet it needed further extension.

Their educational work was probably the most important of all, because much of the misery they tried to relieve was due to mistakes, or neglect, or ignorance, and that was why they wanted to ensure that in Birmingham and its immediate neighbourhood mothers and babies should receive

proper treatment from the very beginning. If that were now the case, if it had been the case for the last twenty years, the Women's Hospital would not, as at present, have so many deplorable wrecks to deal with. It was not uncommon for hospital managers to put forward as a claim for financial support the number of patients that had been dealt with—he had done it himself; but, it would be far more satisfactory if they could report that owing to their educational work their hospital was now half empty.

The arrangements of the wards in the hospital—built on the pavilion plan, and just large enough to be airy as well as snug—their spotlessness and daintiness, the cunning nursing expedients, the efficiency as well as harmony and contentment which reign supreme, have already been the subject of comment in this journal. In the limited space which we can at present devote to the hospital, we desire to draw special attention to one of its latest additions—the verandah, or, as it is named, the new Margaret Ward, of which, by the kindness of the Secretary, we are able to reproduce a very fine photograph recently taken.

The Margaret Ward is one of those which should be empty, because the cases for which it is pro-



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