

a magazine, showing bears, elephants, circus ponies, clowns, &c. On the tray lay scissors, a paste bottle, and a home-made scrap-book with gray leaves. *Of course* the tray could not be turned over to get the pictures until the bowl of broth was emptied and the crackers, milk, and fruit disposed of. During the brief meal the nurse recalled and told many bright and funny circus 'stunts,' and later she helped the little one cut and paste, watching carefully for signs of weariness.

"Even with a minimum of expense, the variety of charms which one may fit into a Magic Tray are practically endless, but always they must be reserved until the tray is emptied. Sometimes there is a story, half hidden behind a mask; funny cartoons, with tissue paper for tracing; simple outline sketches to be coloured; cardboard figures to trace around; sewing cards; raffia weaving; beads to string; dissected pictures and all sorts of flat puzzles; patterns of pasteboard furniture; frequently a letter from some little friend or understanding grown-up; once there was a great array of toothpicks with a cup of soaked peas on top of the tray, from which one could build amazing stick-and-pea houses and furniture; once a set of jack straws and again a set of grotesque Old Maid cards for a jolly game with nurse; blank writing paper or cards to be written on and sent to friends; once an invitation from the Soapbubble Fairy to attend her party that afternoon; gay cords which nurse helped to weave into crow's feet, cat's cradles, snow fences and wood saws by delightful finger-play, using the hands for a loom.

" 'She is such a successful nurse,' I hear them say. Is it not because she does personal and original work, giving of herself freely as well as of her time? To such, success comes well deserved."

The Executive Committee of the Irish Nurses' Association will meet on October 2nd to arrange its programme for a Course of Lectures, and to appoint a Secretary, as, owing to family reasons, Mrs. Jeffers has resigned the appointment.

The King has been cheering up the wounded at the Second Northern General Hospital, Leeds. He told them, "I am very glad to be with you here to-day. I wish to say how proud I am of the way in which you have done your duty, both in France and at the Dardanelles. I trust you will soon be restored to health, and go back to your friends and your homes."

A RED CROSS HOSPITAL.

BY THE SISTER-IN-CHARGE.

In a recent account of a Red Cross hospital I saw it was stated that it was *worked entirely by the local V. A. Detachment with trained help* (the italics are mine) and I could not but think that this description is typical of the attitude taken up by V.A.D. officials, and is responsible for confusion and in some cases much friction. Surely any hospital should be *managed* by trained and experienced workers *assisted* by beginners or volunteers; but unfortunately, trained nurses are not in a position to promote and equip the temporary hospitals so much needed at the present time. The ideal state of affairs would be for women of wealth and influence to equip and help to support such institutions while leaving the management to competent people; perhaps this, however, is too much to expect of human nature, and the trained nurse who is called in to assist the amateurs must face her new experience with tact and the saving grace of humour. For my part I have found much happiness in ministering to the patients and have a rich reward in seeing them regain health of mind and body.

In the hospital of which I am Sister-in-Charge, the staff includes the Commandant (young and untrained), the Lady Superintendent and Night Sister (both trained before marriage many years ago), the Quartermaster (untrained), a number of V.A.D. nurses and cooks, a housemaid, kitchenmaid, porter and boy. All with the exception of the servants and myself, give their services, and I think there is great honour due to the girls of gentle birth who come in to sweep and polish and scrub, for they have not the hope of a good certificate to be earned—a hope which helps many probationers to struggle with unaccustomed drudgery during their first year in a civil hospital. Our V.A.D.'s include the wives and daughters of county magnates, of farmers, tradesmen, gardeners and coachmen, a queer jumble, especially when it happens that a daughter and a servant come from the same house to be treated for a brief time as equals. We dine together, and the dining-room is our only sitting-room. No office or duty-room was provided for me, while my bedroom was so tiny and without a fireplace, that I could not use it much in the day-time. This, in itself, is a proof of the subordinate position I was expected to fill in spite of my imposing title. After a short time I pointed out to the Commandant that it was unusual for a Sister to sit with the junior members of the staff, and somewhat trying to them and to me, and I was then given permission to use her office when on duty. To me, naturally, all V.A.D.'s are much the same as probationers would be, though at first I was shown very little respect as their senior officer, and I felt they thought a paid worker of less account than "lady nurses" and "lady cooks," but I am glad to say that feeling has worn away; I try to be quite fair and just, to treat them all alike,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)