

## THE HANOVER PARK V.A.D. HOSPITAL.

The soldiers and Matron, Miss E. J. Hurlston, were at home on the afternoon of Saturday, February 5th, at the Hanover Park V.A.D. Hospital, Rye Lane, Peckham, when the wards were open for inspection. Very bright and attractive they looked with the walls a pleasant shade of green, and the counterpanes, and curtains of the lockers, either in a colour which contrasted, or a green which harmonised, with the walls. The wards are named Shapter Robinson (after Dr. Shapter Robinson, founder of the Division in 1911), Isla Stewart, Gordon, Havelock, White, Roberts, Botha and Kitchener.

The dedication of a ward in this hospital to Miss Isla Stewart, the great Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital to whom the nursing profession owes a debt of gratitude which it can never repay, for her constant devotion and unflinching courage in the struggle for its organisation, is most appropriate, for the hospital is an Auxiliary (A Group) to No. 1 General Hospital (T.F.), Camberwell, of which Miss Stewart was the first Organising Matron. She took the keenest interest in the foundation of the Service, and in the selection and enrolment of the Nursing Staff for No. 1 Hospital which, as the City of London Hospital, was recruited entirely from nurses holding the three years' certificate of St. Bartholomew's.

The ward is one of the brightest and pleasantest in the hospital, with two large windows, almost down to the floor level, the beds of immaculate neatness, with deep pink quilts, and on the mantel-piece a photograph of Miss Stewart. By and by, by the wish of the Mayoress, the Camberwell coat of arms is to be placed in this ward over the bed named by her.

The operating theatre, well appointed, is on the top floor, and from the windows one can see the extent of the hospital garden, which in warmer weather will afford a delightful outlet for the patients. All the dressings are done in the theatre, after the fashion of the French *Salle de Pansements*.

The Camberwell Division of the British Red Cross Society is indebted to Mr. Charles Higgins, of the firm of Messrs. Higgins & Jones, who has generously placed at its disposal, for use as this hospital, the two houses forming the Hostel for male workers in that establishment, together with linoleum, beds, bedding and linen, electric light, and a considerable amount of furniture. At the beginning of the war it was used as a Hostel for Belgian refugees; now, with its 35 beds, it is an auxiliary to No. 1 General Hospital.

In addition to the Matron, Miss Hurlston, Miss Ethel Wilson is Staff Sister, and Sisters Bayfield and Roberts, trained members of the Voluntary Aid Division, also act as Sisters, and Sister Martin as Night Sister.

At present there are nine patients in the hospital, and, working in connection with it, are fourteen Voluntary Aid Detachments of the Camberwell

Division, each with its own Commandant, and some 200 members on the rota for service; indeed the large hall where the Reception took place last Saturday, seemed filled to overflowing with V.A.D. uniforms of various grades, the red dresses of the commandants being most conspicuous, and the Red Cross on the aprons multiplied so many times—to say nothing of the smart and bemedalled uniforms of the male members—that one almost rubbed one's eyes wondering if one were not suffering from an optical delusion. True, the members of these Detachments not only assist in the nursing, but perform the whole of the domestic work, and the cooking, their only helper being a charwoman who does the grates; furthermore, as many of them are engaged in other occupations, such as that of school teachers, they can only give their services on Saturday and Sunday, and for a few hours morning or evening, but, as one saw this crowd of willing, and in many instances evidently capable helpers, one marvelled afresh at the ineptitude of the Army Medical Department of the War Office, which evolved and still defends the scheme for the organization of the Voluntary Aid Detachments, when with the available material a thoroughly practical scheme would, we do not doubt, have been loyally supported if put before the Voluntary Aid Detachments. One thought also of the sick and infirm in work-house wards, often hopelessly unstaffed, and of the brightness and additional comfort which might be infused into their lives if only a fraction of the service offered to Military Auxiliary Hospitals were placed at their disposal, and to the eyes of a trained nurse the world seemed a rather topsy-turvy place.

The Camberwell Division is, to its credit, a very alert one. I was informed that 150 members of its Voluntary Aid Detachments are on active service, and that the services of many more members, to their sorrow, cannot be utilized in this capacity because the Education Authorities will not give the school teachers leave of absence for this purpose. That, too, gave one pause for thought. If 150 members of one division are on active service, how many have approximately been supplied by all the divisions throughout the Kingdom; and why such an exodus of V.A.D.'s while thoroughly trained nurses remain at home? One hopes that what will ultimately come out of the present impasse is that the earnest and capable members of Voluntary Aid Detachments will realize that the care of the sick is arduous and responsible, not compatible with other occupations, but demanding prolonged practical training, and the devotion of a life time; then their members will be satisfied with nothing less as an ideal than the three years' training of the hospital nurse, and the V.A.D.'s will come into their own as an effective force, as they might have done before now had the foundations of the movement been well and truly laid, and thoroughness and efficiency been the guiding principle of the War Office in this connection.

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