

THE BETHNAL GREEN WAR HOSPITAL.

The Bethnal Green War Hospital is one of those that has been transferred for the time being from the Poor Law to the Military Authorities. The original patients were accommodated in the Bethnal Green Workhouse, and St. George's in the East Infirmary. The original nursing staff were retained by the Guardians to look after their own charges, so it happens that the Matron, Miss E. Dodds, is the only one of the Infirmary staff that remained in the War Hospital.

The hospital accommodates about 700 beds, and the wounded are received here straight from the clearing hospitals. An hour's notice and a convoy may arrive of any number between ten and fifty. Stretchers and wheeled couches await them at the door and they are conveyed to their respective wards, with the quaint names. The wards for the most part are called by the name of some virtue or attribute, *e.g.*, Patience, Mercy, Justice, &c. The hospital kit in which they arrive is stoved, brushed and folded, and stored in a large storeroom, where many hundreds of neat bundles testified to the labour of this particular department.

The large kitchen is fitted up with modern culinary arrangements, and we were particularly taken with the hot water tins, containing small dishes for each ration. These, we were informed, were a private gift. The laundry has been converted into a department for treatment by Radiant heat and Massage. Here was to be found every appliance that modern ingenuity can devise for the treatment of injured joints and muscles. A fixed bicycle, a mechanical canoe with sculls, a steering wheel, were only some of the contrivances for that purpose. The very newest thing was the apparatus for injecting septic wounds with ozone.

The long dining-room plays many parts; it is also the recreation hall, and on Sunday it serves as a chapel. For the latter purpose it is hung with flags of the Allied nations and crowded out with men. In another part of the building we saw the little ward that is fitted up as a Roman

Catholic Chapel, and it showed both love and care in its arrangements.

The wards are not beautiful, but they spoke eloquently of the fact that in them the happiness and comfort of the men is the first consideration. In spite of their grievous suffering, and often terrible mutilation, the men looked happy and content. They were evidently doing just what they liked to do with reasonable limits. One man lay asleep, his injured arm in splints resting in a sling suspended from a gallows looking arrangement. This by means of pulleys adjusted itself to every position in which the sleeper might turn. It was obvious that the pain and discomfort were largely minimised by this ingenious contrivance.

A delightful little dressing trolley in one of the wards is the envy of the hospital, for it is the only one it can boast. It is rather surprising that such a very necessary aid to surgical nursing should be regarded in the light of an extra, and as such left to the chance charitable donors. Here is an outlet for some generous mind; we can think of no more useful or welcome addition to the equipment of the too often overworked War Sister.

The V.A.D.s are doing good work. The Matron in the early part of the year gave them a course of instruction, of which she is now reaping the benefit. At the end of a year's continuous work and on the Matron's recommendation, a stripe on the left arm is added to their uniform.

Miss Dodds assured us that the most charming

thing in the hospital was the infant son of one of the men, who was a constant visitor to his daddy. We were privileged to make his acquaintance as he lay kicking and gurgling on an adjoining bed, and quite endorse the Matron's opinion.

There is an open-air ward, where septic wounds make admirable progress, and under canvas are the "carriers" of the cerebro-spinal bacillus. These are shortly to be removed.

It was pleasant to notice on our exhaustive round that everyone we encountered had a smile and a kind word from the Matron, and the smiles were returned with interest.

The building, which is somewhat grim, was somehow illuminated with kindness and sympathy.



MISS DODDS, MATRON,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)