

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S HOSPITAL FOR OFFICERS, HIGHGATE.

We have recently had occasion to visit Queen Alexandra's Hospital for Officers, so pleasantly situated on the southern slope of Highgate Hill, in a delightful district. From the windows of the original mansion one gets a fine view of Parliament Hill and breathes fresh air from over the "Fields" and Hampstead Heath, and across West Hill Road on a summer's day banks of clover, waving grasses and browsing milch cows are to be seen through the beautiful wrought-iron gates entwined with gilded wreaths of holly, guarding the entrance to the park surrounding Holly Lodge.

As I walked up the hill, I stood peeping through these gates for quite a while, enjoying the scent of the clover, and it seemed impossible that forty-two years had slipped away since I had passed this way. It was high summer all those years ago. Then the gates were open, and I passed through in a smart canary-coloured Victoria, to enjoy a strawberry feast with the Baroness Burdett-Coutts as hostess, and with much of the rank and fashion of the day as fellow guests.

A gay company—a lovely parterre! How clearly memory reproduces the brilliant scene! Even the girls wore trains and bonnets in those days!

I see myself attired in a voluminous white muslin gown, tucked and draped over pink *poult de soie*, wearing a little white *tulle* bonnet trimmed with pink and mauve primulas. And she who sat beside me in the yellow carriage, loveliest of human creatures—dead these many years—was gowned in forget-me-not blue, the colour of her eyes so smiling sweet. In those days there were boys and "old boys," both very exquisite and enchanting in their degree, who made the lives of sprightly damsels very merry indeed, just no doubt as they will again when a new generation has arisen which has no poignant memories of the Great War. Let us hope that in the open spaces of Highgate the clover and the milch cows may continue to delude the passer by. Incredible that the very heart of London beats but three miles away!

But to proceed up Milford Lane.

Here I find Queen Alexandra's Hospital, and enter in.

The first person one speaks to on the threshold usually conveys the atmosphere of the house, and here I am taken in hand by a young girl with a *real* smile, who appears happy to be useful and not officious, and who guides me to the little room which contains someone very precious.

But that is another story!

Upon a future visit I am shown over the hospital in the most courteous way. It contains 33 beds, the majority of which are placed in separate rooms, opening on to well-raised balconies into which the patients' beds can be wheeled and where

they can spend the greater part of the day and night, weather permitting. As a rule, privacy is not sufficiently considered in military hospitals, and patients suffering more or less—as all our sick and wounded are in this war—from noise, greatly value quiet, and find it a wonderful restorative. In this connection, the balcony at Highgate can be curtained off in sections, thus dividing bed from bed, whilst the garden is in full view, and making it possible for the patients to enjoy entire freedom from restraint—so irksome to the sick. Thus bed-clothing can be tossed aside and bare toes exposed to view. Also hand may clasp hand, and a refreshing nap ensue.

In going over this hospital, one is reminded of how much thought has been expended in evolving good order and comfort. The first thing I noted was the quiet—the linoleum in the corridors is cushioned with quilted grass, thus footsteps are rendered almost noiseless; and there are quite a number of nursing dodges with which the managers of other military hospitals might acquaint themselves. The little contrivance outside each door into which a reversible ticket can be slipped—one colour denoting "patient being washed," the other that the room may be entered, is very desirable.

The hospital is fully equipped with operation theatre, sterilization room, X-ray room, and all the apparatus necessary. The kitchen and serving-room are full of practical contrivances, and staffed with willing workers.

In the Report of the Honorary Surgeon-in-Charge, Mr. Herbert J. Paterson, we find that he lays great stress on the benefit to severely wounded of treatment in pure air and quiet surroundings, which, we agree with him, cannot be exaggerated. He adds:—

"The experience of two years demonstrates that by treatment under the conditions obtaining at Highgate, the duration of hospital treatment necessary is diminished by about thirty days in a hundred; indeed it is probably not an exaggeration to say that in some cases lives have been saved which would have been lost had the treatment been carried out in London itself."

Mr. Paterson also considers that "another most interesting feature of the work at Highgate is the influence of fresh air on the condition of patients after the administration of an anæsthetic. At Highgate there is a slighter rise of temperature, and greater freedom from bronchial irritation as compared with the effects of similar anæsthetics administered in a London hospital. This is especially the case with regard to nitrous oxide gas and oxygen, which, during the past year, has been extensively employed. From the point of view of the patients' comfort and the freedom from after effects, the extended use of this anæsthetic marks a great advance in the art of anæsthesia."

From a few statistics we learn that the cost per bed per day has been reduced to 14s. 11d. But in the report of expenditure March, 1916, to

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