

A VISIT TO LEICESTER.

It was with much pleasure that in accordance with a long standing engagement I went down to Leicester last week to speak at the meeting of the Leicester Royal Infirmary Nurses' League. On the kind invitation of Miss Pell Smith, I spent the previous night with her at her delightful Home Hospital at 2, de Montford Square. Such a cheery welcome there was first from Miss Pell Smith, old, tried, and staunch supporter of the State Registration cause, and then from the Home itself. Patients are well done by indeed who find their way to this Home, as very many do, to their great advantage. To begin with Miss Pell Smith, who in organising her Home many years ago followed the method adopted by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick at Gordon House Home Hospital of maintaining a permanent nursing staff adequate to the needs of the Home, has a staff of ten nurses, a housekeeper, and five maids, besides occasional help, for fifteen patients. Nurse Margaret, who has been with Miss Pell Smith for 17 years, is her right hand, and it is manifest that it is to the great advantage of the patients to be cared for by a staff thoroughly conversant with its routine.

The rooms are spacious, and most comfortably furnished—I can speak to the comfort of one with a glowing fire of real coal, an armchair drawn up in front of it, and a bowl of soup quickly brought, and daintily served, for the refreshment of the "traveller."

Later, at dinner, I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Mearns, the Superintendent of the Queen's Nurses in Leicester. Queen's Nurses and their work must always have a very warm corner in the interest of nurses, for it is second to none in its efficiency, in its value as a social service agency, and in its careful administration of funds. Those who wish to get really good value for their money cannot do better than support the work of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

On Thursday, November 17th, I spent a most interesting morning with Miss C. E. Vincent, R.R.C., Matron of the Royal Infirmary, seeing the extensions and additions since I last visited the Infirmary in 1914. First there is the new block, now some two floors high, of which the Duke of York lays the foundation stone on November 24th, and will provide, when complete, another 120 badly needed beds for medical, surgical, and gynaecological cases, for the present beds (some 320) are quite inadequate to the needs of the town. The new block will push its way through part of the laundry, which is at present in the throes of reconstruction, and will eliminate a nurses' tennis court, but these are incidentals inevitable to extension schemes.

One new department was of special interest, the beautiful little mortuary attached to the pathological block, plain almost to severity, but satisfying, and dignified. There is a cold storage chamber, a well equipped waiting room for the relatives, from which also a body can be viewed, as the upper part of the division between the

waiting room and the mortuary chapel is of glass, ordinarily screened by a short curtain.

In the mortuary itself, of which all the fittings have been made on the premises, a shallow zinc tray, on which the body is laid—in front of the altar adorned with flowers—rests on a solid stand of teak, and there is a handsome prie-dieu beautifully carved, suggestive of the consoling belief that our dead though passed from sight can still be helped by the prayers of those who love them.

The handsome new Massage Department is a gift of the Freemasons of the town, in memory of their brother Masons who fell in the war. It is entirely staffed by certified masseuses. This has both advantages and disadvantages, on the whole one is inclined to think the latter predominate. It of course is an expensive arrangement, and the nurses of the Infirmary do not get the advantage of this valuable special training as formerly, the reason being that now that the term of training for the examination of the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics is increased from six months to a year it is manifestly impossible that so long a period of the probationer's training should be devoted to this one subject.

The department for venereal diseases is in charge of a Sister, and staffed with senior nurses.

A very special feature at the Leicester Royal Infirmary is its workshops. All furniture is made there by members of their expert staff, and good material, and sound workmanship, thus ensured; all repairs are done by this staff, indeed there seems to be little that it cannot do.

The chapel, in which is a memorial tablet to four nurses who gave their lives in the war, is the special charge of the nursing staff, and has recently been structurally renovated, and internally re-decorated, at a cost of £120 which they have collected and contributed.

The Nurses' Home is also being greatly enlarged, and it will add much to the comfort of the staff when the new bedrooms are taken into use. I noticed with much pleasure that the nursing staff take a lively interest in current as well as nursing affairs. The lounge hall in the Home is provided with a sloping stand for daily papers, after the manner of a public library, and THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is available to all.

In the next issue I hope to give an account of the League Open Meeting, at which some 130 trained nurses were present, and at which the President, Miss C. E. Vincent, R.R.C., ably presided. So much space in this issue is devoted to the proceedings of the General Nursing Council that it is impossible to deal adequately with this meeting.

It will be noted in another column that the meeting took the opportunity of sending up a unanimous Resolution to the General Nursing Council, which met on the following day, expressing the opinion of this very representative meeting that the word "certificated" should stand in the Register against the names of those nurses who possess certificates.

M. B.

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