

## CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL.

Charing Cross Hospital is situated in one of the busiest parts of London, and probably there is no hospital where the staff have to be in a greater state of preparedness to meet emergencies so far, at least, as its Casualty Department is concerned. The amount of work, by the way, which passes through this department, very much constricted at present as to space, is enormous, and must be a great tax upon those responsible for dealing with it.

Many of the wards date back to a hundred or more years ago, when the Hospital was first founded by Dr. Benjamin Golding, but they have few of the drawbacks which one is apt to associate with hospital architecture of that time, being, as they are, so large and spacious; this fact makes up for the lack of some conveniences which it is impossible to find except in more newly constructed wards; yet, even so far as appearances go, one cannot say that the advantages are all on the side of the newer wards, because these older wards lend themselves in a certain way to an artistic arrangement and the large, central, pillared blocks break up the length of the ward and thereby improve its general appearance. Most of the newer wards have beautiful tiled walls and the predominating colour is cream; whenever one enters them one experiences a feeling of light, giving rise to the conclusion that the reflecting properties of tiles are considerably greater than are those of painted walls; naturally from the point of view of asepsis the former are preferable. One is apt to imagine that they would tend to give a cold appearance to the general appearance of the ward, but this is not the case, possibly owing to the arrangements of the wards, the decorativeness of the flowers and many of the little cots, and to the reflection and play of light on their surfaces.

We liked the large solid looking ward tables, the space under which is closed up; this arrangement, in addition to its effect of minimising the accumulation of dust, provides for the delightful little draw-like shelves which can be pulled out; the arrangement was due to the ingenuity of the Matron of the Hospital who apparently loves to have a large amount of available drawer and cupboard space, a plan which must help the sisters very much in connection with ward management.

The children's wards were particularly delightful, and here, too, we found many inventions to add to the safety, comfort and efficiency of the nursing. The fire with its guard, we were told, was provided to meet the expressed wish of the Chairman of the Hospital, who insisted that no children's ward was complete without a fire, although this need not be relied upon solely for ward heating. Many of the probationers of other days would have viewed with relief the introduction of baths such as those we found connected with this particular ward, for they stand high enough, on their iron fixtures, to enable the nurses to do the bathing comfortably without stooping, almost to their toes, in order to bath their small patients. The taps we noticed were well placed to prevent any catastrophe on the unexpected wriggling of a child. Close to the ward is the delightful "playground" of the children with a large balcony opening out from it, where the youngsters are able to toddle and take the air in the sunshine.

The theatre of Charing Cross Hospital is very up to date indeed, and we admired many of the latest improvements in surgical equipment there. Fine glass screens round the gallery add somewhat to the general appearance of the theatre, while safeguarding the patients, to some extent, against sepsis. The great scialytique over the operating table must make it a matter of indifference, so far as light is concerned, whether the operations are performed in the day or in the night; one realises something of the march of time when one remembers the small electric light which

used to hang over the operating table not so many years ago, and which was sometimes supplemented by a faggot of flaming candles.

One very interesting point about Charing Cross Hospital is its close connection with the Dramatic Profession. In one ward you find a brass tablet signifying that one particular bed is dedicated to the memory of John Lawrence Toole, and other names almost as familiar appear here and there on brass plates, while certain beds are maintained through the generosity of the Staffs of different theatres. These shining plates have quite a decorative effect, and would make interesting records if one could find time to walk round and prepare a little "historette" in connection with each. Surely it would have given no small pleasure to the people, so commemorated, to see their names standing out on the beautiful polished brass in this great house of healing. But it is not only the Dramatic world which has helped to maintain the activities of this Hospital; there is one fine ward which is maintained by the Shanghai Race Club, for instance. Passing round the Hospital we were interested to come across a tiny oriel window which, we were informed, was that at which Professor Huxley was accustomed to sit in his student days at Charing Cross Hospital. It looks on to a blank wall now, but its associations make it one of the most treasured possessions of the Hospital.

The X-ray department is very well developed, and appears to be constantly in use. The Sister Tutor's department is well supplied with all the requirements for teaching. We could have wished to see it larger, but no doubt it has had to take a secondary place in this connection, owing to the claims made upon the Hospital for the accommodation of the sick. The Nurses' Quarters of Charing Cross Hospital are exceedingly nice. The sitting-rooms are bright and, in certain corridors at least, they are wonderfully quiet, considering that they are so close to the incessant flow of traffic through the Strand. The spacious sitting-room, with its silence room beyond, suggests possibilities for dancing, music and other enjoyments in off-duty time, and the Sisters' sitting room is also a large and cheerful apartment. The dining-room looked particularly artistic on the day we visited the Home, and had the same abundance of flowers which we admired in almost every department. The Matron explained this unusual wealth of decoration as due to the proximity of Covent Garden; so many of the frequenters of the latter have friends benefiting from the Hospital. Both in the Home and the wards wireless apparatus has been installed.

Miss Cochrane, R.R.C. (Matron of Charing Cross Hospital), is very progressive and much interested in the developments of the Hospital. She expressed the greatest pleasure that the island on which stands the Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital is now to become part of the Charing Cross Hospital, and she looks forward, with pleasant anticipation, to the extensions which will arise therefrom, with benefit to both Institutions. Miss Cochrane does not confine her energies to the superintendence merely of the nursing department, for we found, on going over the Hospital, that quite a number of the architectural conveniences owe their origin to her fertile imagination. Her pet scheme at the present time is that of founding a nurses' bed in the Hospital, and she has attained some considerable success in her efforts towards this. At the present time we believe that the progress made in this direction is due to nurses trained or in training at Charing Cross Hospital, but it would be an excellent thing if other nurses would also help her in a piece of work which might prove of very great benefit to members of the profession who are overtaken by illness and, as often happens, have difficulty in finding an institution where they may enter for care and treatment without a heavy expenditure.

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