

that were erected early in the War and were converted so far as they could be for medical use. The huts were expensive and inconvenient and it became absolutely necessary to replace them with a permanent building. Your Royal Highness now sees the result. It contains 204 beds, including 20 for officers, 6 for Nursing Sisters and 23 for the wives and children of airmen. It will be the hospital for the great Air Force station of Halton, but it will also be a hospital for all Air Force cases that are outside convenient range of naval, military or civil accommodation. To it again will come Air Force invalids from overseas.

We believe it to be efficiently designed and to be capable of economical administration. Your Royal Highness will notice how we have arranged the wards and administrative block in parallel lines and in such a way as to make administration economical and expansion easy. Your Royal Highness will also notice the arrangements that we have made for getting as much sunlight and air as possible, for reducing dust and labour in cleaning and for making the wards, particularly the children's wards, look as bright and attractive as possible. We believe the operating theatre to be equipped with the most up-to-date lighting. We have specially tinted its walls to suit the eye of the operator and we have installed lamps that throw no shadow.

Also we have wards floored with rubber—thanks to the generosity of the Rubber Growers' Association—and a flat roof for natural sun treatment.

These and other features make me hope that the hospital will prove one of the most efficient and successful in the country. The Air Force is rightly proud of its medical and nursing services and of the splendid work that its medical officers and nurses, often in the face of great difficulties, have carried out both at home and abroad. Already they have made their mark in various branches of medical science. Already they have helped to make the standard of health in the Air Force a very high one. There is no Service in the world where a high standard of health is so constantly needed. There is no Service in the world where the most efficient medical and surgical help is more urgently required to meet the inevitable strains and risks of life in the air. The medical service and the Air Force as a whole will now have in Halton a hospital fully equipped to meet their needs. It is being opened under the most happy and favourable auspices. Your Royal Highness' presence to-day and interest in work of the Nursing Service is a great encouragement to all of us. We are sincerely grateful, therefore, to your Royal Highness for performing this ceremony and we are confident in assuring your Royal Highness that you will have no reason to regret a connection that we hope will be a very long one with the Royal Air Force Nursing Service and with the hospital that I now ask your Royal Highness to declare opened.

#### The Opening.

The Princess then said:—

"I HAVE MUCH PLEASURE IN DECLARING THIS ROYAL AIR FORCE HOSPITAL OPEN."

#### The Prayer of Benediction.

The Bishop of Buckingham, who was vested in a crimson cope, embroidered with gold, and was wearing a gold mitre, and carried his pastoral staff, then pronounced the prayer of Benediction, praying that Almighty God, Whose Son went about doing good, would bless and sanctify the Hospital, and that He would pour His blessing on the Nursing Sisters' Quarters, that with patience and tenderness, wisdom and strength they might be better enabled to carry their labour of love.

The Princess was then conducted round the Hospital by the Secretary of State for Air, the Officer Commanding, and the Matron (Miss Welch). Her Royal Highness expressed much interest in the arrangement and chatted with some of the patients, many of whom, in their blue hospital suits, were standing at attention at the foot of their beds. In the Families' Section, twins, aged three weeks, in their pretty pink and white muslin cots, came in for considerable attention. Serene and smiling, neither they nor their mother in a bed near by gave any hint of their stirring entrance into the world by way of Cæsarian section.

The Hospital is built round three sides of a quadrangle, the Nursing Sisters' Quarters forming the fourth side. In the centre is a large lawn, with seats invitingly near. It is charmingly placed on high ground overlooking the Chiltern range, and should be very healthy.

As Sir Samuel Hoare pointed out, in some of the wards as well as in the hall, the floors are covered with rubber, and the result is a most grateful quiet. The operating theatres and the X-ray plant are of the most modern type.

After leaving the Hospital the Princess made a pause on her way to the Nursing Sisters' Quarters, to plant a copper beech tree, which she did with a presentation spade, made in the Hospital workshop.

The Sisters' Quarters are charming. The Matron has a self-contained flat, and Sisters and Nurses all have pleasant rooms, placed so as to receive the greatest amount of sun, spacious cupboards and hot and cold water laid on add to the comfort of these rooms, which are arranged with individual taste. The long dining-room where, by invitation of the Officer Commanding and the Matron, tea was served to a number of guests, is a delightful room, and on the opening day the tables were decorated with golden and bronze chrysanthemums, with charming effect. It opens into the recreation room, which has plenty of comfortable chairs, and overlooks the Chilterns.

We must not omit to mention the white duck overall of the Sisters, smart and serviceable, with soft turn-down collar, and sleeves fastened at the wrist, but with the lower half detachable at will. It is buttoned down the front with white pearl buttons and is worn with a cap of Army pattern to which the Air Force wings, embroidered in dark blue, give a distinctive touch. The shoulder straps are of dark blue, on which the rank is denoted by varying colours.

Maybe it is the healthiness of their surroundings, or the care with which they are selected, but the Sisters are of an exceptionally fine type, and evidently of a high standard of health.

To Miss Cruickshank, Matron-in-Chief, Miss Cameron, Principal Matron, Miss Welch, Matron of the Hospital, and all those Sisters who helped to make our visit so enjoyable, we offer our sincere thanks and congratulations on their opportunities for useful services.

Amongst the visitors who were evidently deeply interested in the modern equipment of this beautiful new Hospital and Nurses' Home we noticed Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Hodgins, R.R.C. (Matron-in-Chief of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service), Dame Anne Beadsmore Smith (Matron-in-Chief, Territorial Army Nursing Service), Miss Beatrice Monk, R.R.C. (Matron of the London Hospital), Miss Wilcox, R.R.C. (Matron of King's College Hospital), Members of the Advisory Board, Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, Miss A. W. Gill, R.R.C., Miss Lloyd Still, R.R.C., and Miss M. W. Campbell (late Matron of the Air Force Hospital at Halton).

M. B.

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