

## THE ROYAL INFIRMARY, EDINBURGH.

### A WONDERFUL MONUMENT TO PROGRESS IN THE TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

One of the greatest hospitals of modern times, the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, still maintains its high prestige, and it is a wonderful monument to the tremendous progress that has been accomplished in the treatment of disease during the last hundred years. Edinburgh has indeed reason to be proud of what she has achieved in medical science, and her sons have carried her message to almost every part of the globe; some hold high place in the profession which they chose, others labour for the relief of the suffering, often against great odds, in outlying places of the Empire where, but for them, there might be little hope of comfort or hope for those who fall victims to disease in one form or another.

What impresses one greatly, from a general point of view, in making a tour of this famous hospital, is the atmosphere of courtesy which seems to pervade every part of it. This is somehow reflected in a feeling of peace, hospitality and kindness that must re-act, perhaps imperceptibly, but none the less strongly, upon the sick and suffering who come to the hospital for treatment of one kind or another. Another impression one gets is of the enthusiasm which every member of the nursing staff whom one meets, from the administrative department downwards, appears to feel in the efficiency and beauty of every part of this finely equipped institution. Theatres and wards, such as these, would naturally be a source of pride, but so also are the numerous inventions that appear everywhere; these show vast ingenuity and cleverness in most cases and are well calculated to add to the convenience of the medical and nursing staffs as well as to the comfort and safety of the patients.

Since it moved from the old "Infirmary Street" decades ago, the hospital has stood in the most enviable surroundings imaginable; the wide meadows it overlooks must have their influence, in their beauty and air space, on the work of healing. The architecture of the hospital has always impressed visitors and is in harmony with its great traditions. How rich indeed are its associations; some of the greatest medical men and surgeons have worked here and given the best of their fine intellects to the healing of the sick poor and the furtherance of medical knowledge and progress. Their names and their achievements are woven into the history of the place, a place of noble memories and a great heritage for the future.

#### The Simpson Memorial Maternity Pavilion.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the hospital, at the present time, is the Simpson Memorial Maternity Pavilion, of the opening of which we gave an account some time ago. The wards are beautifully spacious and the yellow walls give an impression of sunlight even on the grayest day. Each floor has a very large balcony overlooking the Meadows with their fine trees; when permissible the patients are taken here to enjoy the air and sunlight, and to find interest in the passers-by. On each floor is a ward with six beds, two containing two beds and there are two single wards; so much space given to each bed would have been a condition undreamt of thirty years ago or less. The architect must have enjoyed himself in planning this building, and he has taken full advantage of the free play given to his imaginative faculties; so small a thing as a night light, like a very diminutive window low in the corridor wall, gives evidence of the thought that had gone to the planning, for, while efficiently lighting the floor space, it is yet calculated to avoid throwing too much light over the whole corridor and ceiling which might, at times, obtrude itself into the wards. The lifts are all of a size to take a bed,

and so a patient can be moved from one ward to another without suffering inconvenience or needless movement. Everywhere there is a feeling of spaciousness, yet economy in this respect has been regarded when possible, and the fine wide spiral staircase presents rather a pleasing aspect as you look down upon its curves from the top of the building; a triumph of architectural planning and proportion it appeared to us. Another very delightful feature of the building is its abundance of window space.

Everywhere is to be seen evidence of inventive, mechanical skill. Wards, theatres, bathrooms, kitchens, utility rooms, flower rooms all present new inventions that are most interesting to the uninitiated and must prove of incalculable value to the efficiency and smooth running of the hospital. The convenient disposal of soiled dressings, the cleansing and sterilisation of bed-pans, the very complete arrangements in the bathrooms, and a thousand other well thought out contrivances made us envy the nurses in this hospital. The room, on each floor, used for the first stage of labour seems to be regarded as of supreme practical value in so far as the teaching of the student midwives is concerned, so much so that the more elaborately equipped apartment or theatre, designed for the later stages, is not always used. The arrangement of the different nurseries is most interesting; here again there is space and light in abundance, and the wards for the premature babies must indeed preserve many infant lives. One ward in particular reminded us (because of its high temperature, *i.e.*, 85° F., and its light) more of a hot house for very rare and delicate plants than of a nursery. The mechanism in use for cleansing and sterilising the babies' bottles is efficient in the extreme, and must save a vast amount of valuable time. We visited also the wards for mothers suffering from venereal disease and the large antenatal department.

#### The Florence Nightingale Home.

Very fortunate are the nurses (both of the general part of the Hospital and its Maternity Pavilion) who live in the Florence Nightingale Home. It is a palace in comparison with the Nurses Home we knew thirty years ago, although that was considered a model home when it was first established; very charming indeed it was, and it still offers very comfortable conditions, though somehow it looks strangely dwarfed by the dimensions of its new rival. The principal sitting room in the latter is truly magnificent in its proportions and other public rooms are large and bright as could be desired. They are charmingly furnished, and the shampoo rooms, the little apartments where the nurses can make themselves a cup of tea, a room for games and last, but perhaps not least in the estimation of the nurses, the laundry room, where all appliances are ready to hand, are all features that add in no small measure to the value and convenience of the Home to the nurses, while contributing to the order and neatness which is apparent everywhere. In the wall of one of the main corridors is "the Nightingale Brick" presented, as is recorded below it, by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. The bedrooms of the staff, with various built-in fixtures, are all that the young woman of the present day could desire. Communicating with the Home is a large block of buildings which were originally rows of well-built flats and which have been taken over by the hospital for use as a Nurses' Home. It has been charmingly adapted for its purpose by making use of the original plan of the different flats and indeed, in its own way, it presents a very pleasing contrast with the new home, of which it is, in effect, a part. Unexpected little staircases and passages give to it that indescribable characteristic which, for want of a better word, an artist designates as "interest" but it implies, from him, more than picturesqueness and half a dozen other suggestive qualities.

The Hospital proper has now 1161 beds and there are

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