

## THE CHRONIC SICK.

We believe that a good many consciences have been pricking unpleasantly of late, where the Chronic Sick are concerned; personally we have felt that if there are sick derelict human beings "put away" awaiting a lingering death owing to poverty or the neglect of those who should care for them, it is the duty of the Nursing community to rouse itself and take such action as is possible to amend conditions. Lack of a sense of citizenship in nursing ranks must be realised; we must obtain accurate information of what public bodies responsible for the care of the Chronic Sick are doing; they handle the rates to which many nurses subscribe.

If the Assistant Nurse controversy has done nothing else, it has made us realise that if we had done our public duty without fear or favour, the semi-trained woman would not have been needed, so far as the sick poor are concerned. Never too late to mend.

Enquiry in the district in which we live confirmed on all sides that the London County Council St. Mary Abbot's Hospital, Kensington, possessed model wards for the care of the Chronic Sick, and that their environment had been, through the devotion of Matron, Sister and Nurses, brought to a high standard of humane efficiency.

The pleasure of association with Miss Ingman through the R.B.N.A., and especially as a past Councillor of the British College of Nurses, prompted an invitation to visit the hospital, of which we recently availed ourselves.

Sixty years' active association with hospitals has only confirmed our conviction that there is no happier place in the world than behind their gates, a world where strife and self-seeking are apparently excluded at the Porter's Lodge, a special type of official of whose courtesy we have lasting memories: "James" at the old M.R.I. in 1878; "William" of "The London" in 1879; and the redoubtable "Partridge," of Barts, who loved us to share a joke at Little Britain Gate.

At St. Mary Abbot's we met the same old courtesy—no waiting—just promptly piloted along the pathway, and we found ourselves in Matron's office, an indispensable place no doubt, but from which it is not wise to entirely control the Nursing Department; this can only be done efficiently

by personal contact with medical and nursing units at work, and personal interest in individual patients for whom the institution exists. Thus Matron keeps in touch with the humanities, *Patients first.*

This very interesting hospital has an environment of ten acres, and in visiting the wards we pass through gardens, quadrangles, and blasted spaces, made desolate by the succession of 12 bombs, where the loss of life was comparatively small, Matron being one of the staff to escape as by a miracle. We greatly enjoyed our conducted tour through wards and scientifically equipped departments. The former beautifully spotless; the pale green bedspreads giving a touch of hope and Spring, and apparently all supervised by Sisters of quality, and young nurses enjoying their work. In one department Sister Tutor was busy with her class, work she loves, and skeleton and bones and other necessities had apparently no gruesome effect on the pupils. No expense has apparently been spared in the equipment of the operating theatres and their annexes, and these departments are in daily and constant use. The care and devotion to scientific and surgical cleanliness of the Theatre Staff is never flagging—everything that should shine does so with effulgence.

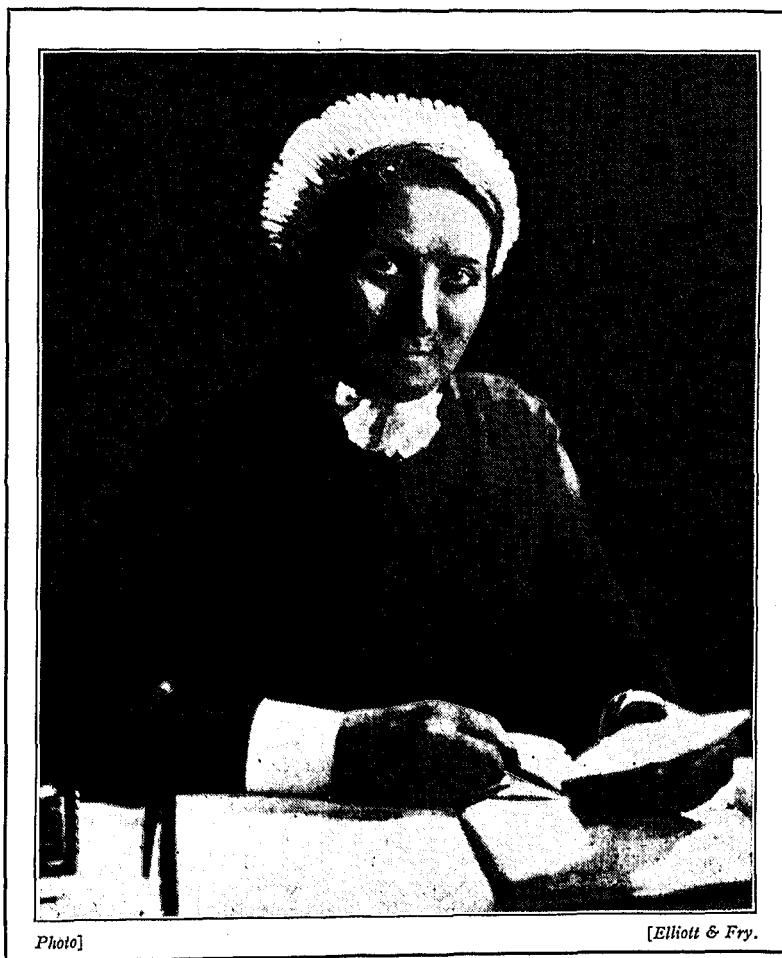
### THE CHRONIC SICK WARDS.

We then proceeded to the Chronic Sick wards of which we had heard so much praise. Situated at the top of a block we found spacious accommodation for the sick. Upon entering the ward, a long vista of space was apparent—four wards leading one into the other through centre doors, light and ventilation through windows on each

side of the wards. Here we found spotless beds occupied by speckless old ladies, many of them upwards of ninety years of age, and apparently full of life and spirits, and evidently one and all the devoted children of the Sister of the ward—a veritable mother. It was a delightful experience to find that the very special work of caring for the chronic sick is work in which the maternal instinct finds endless scope and satisfaction.

It is not too much to say that the atmosphere of these wards was joyous, like that which pertains in a nursery for happy babes—all loved to be taken notice of and to display their prowess.

"You must see my vicar," one exclaimed, producing



Photo

[Elliott & Fry.]

MISS MAUDE MARY INGMAN, S.R.N., S.C.M., F.B.C.N.,  
Matron, St. Mary Abbot's Hospital, Kensington.

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