

IN A NEW YORK HOSPITAL.

EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS OF A PATIENT.

How a Patient's Recovery—Baths, Bed, Nurse and Medical Attendance—Religion and Recreation.

A patient, who spent some time in St. Luke's hospital, New York, gives his experience in the Sun columns as follows: I was turned over to the senior house surgeon, and by him catechized as to my place of birth, age, habits of life, constitution, previous sicknesses and their character, and everything bearing upon the ailment for which I was to be treated. I was then assigned to a bed in the men's surgical ward. Each iron bed is hung with white lawn curtains suspended from iron rods. These are drawn back to allow free access to light and air, but may be closed if an examination by the surgeons or the dressing of injuries is necessary. Upon entering the hospital each patient is offered a bath in a well-equipped bath room, and then put in bed, where the linen is fresh and clean. The lavatories and other outer appointments of the hospital are modern and of excellent quality. The operating room where the patient is taken for etherization is on the first floor, and out of sight or hearing of the patients in any of the wards. I walked to the operating room. After being there, under the knife, over half an hour, as I was told, I found myself in bed, thoroughly bandaged, without having experienced any pain or having been conscious that the operation had been made. Similar has been the experience of every patient who has spoken to me.

In the hospital there are six wards; a male and a female medical ward for the treatment of all patients not requiring surgery and not afflicted with contagious or infectious diseases; a male and a female surgical ward for the treatment of patients requiring surgery; a children's ward for the medical and surgical treatment of all children of tender years; and a convalescent ward for the treatment of patients partially recovered from their complaints. In a smaller building separated from the main one at its western wing, are two wards for isolated patients. No patients afflicted with contagious diseases are admitted into St. Luke's, but if any patient under treatment for other complaints is attacked by an infectious disease he or she is at once removed to the isolated ward.

To patients afflicted with incurable diseases admission is refused under the hospital rules. Cases of mania a potu, opium taking, melancholia and incipient insanity are rejected. Short religious services are held each morning in the several wards and in the chapel each evening, accompanied by music from the organ and choir. The music floats through the sick wards somewhat subdued in sound, and is both soothing and pleasing to the patients. Its influence daily, and especially on Sundays when it is fuller and of longer duration, seems in all respects beneficial both to the mind and the body.

Neither nationality, creed, nor color is regarded in the reception of patients. Of 1,531 patients admitted and treated during the year ending last St. Luke's day, only 686 were of American birth and only 600 were Episcopalians. The remainder belonged to other Christian denominations. Fifteen were Jews. Of the 21,288 patients who, at the date of the last annual report, had been admitted since the opening of the hospital in 1858, 8,839 were Protestant Episcopalians, 5,324 were Roman Catholics, and the remainder, excluding ninety-five Hebrews, belonged to various Protestant denominations. A proper respect for religious services is expected, are regulations for the observance of decent conduct and language are enforced, but nothing more than any self-respecting man would voluntarily observe under like circumstances. The seal motto, "Corpus sanare, animam salvere," fairly indicates the purposes of the management.

Here is the routine: At 5 A. M. the night nurse is relieved from duty and the work of cleaning the wards, making the beds, and putting each ward in order for the morning visit of the house surgeon and his assistants is done by the day nurse, with occasional help from convalescent charity patients. At 7 A. M. an abundant breakfast is provided for patients, adapted to the requirements of each. Fish is served on Wednesdays and Fridays. The house surgeon, or physician, accompanied by his two assistants, makes his morning rounds, commencing at 8 A. M. He examines each patient individually and prescribes such treatment as he thinks proper. From 9:15 A. M. to 10 A. M. the pastor, or his assistant, officiates at religious services in the wards, each service occupying about five minutes and consisting of the reading of a portion of the Psalms and prayer. After 10 A. M. the surgeons see to the dressing of the injuries of such patients as require it. Those whom the medical staff consider fit are allowed to sit or walk in the spacious grounds surrounding the hospital from 10 A. M. to 1 P. M., and again from 3 P. M. to 5 P. M. At 1:30 P. M. dinner is served. Supper is served at 6:30 P. M. One of the attendants passes around the ward with cups of milk between breakfast and dinner and between supper and bedtime. Religious services are held in the chapel at 6:30 P. M., daily. Those patients who are able to do so may attend. The house surgeon and his assistants then make their evening rounds, leaving with the night nurse and apothecary explicit instructions as to the treatment of patients. At 9 P. M., all patients are required to be in bed. It is the duty of the nurse to enforce order and quiet for the night. One surgeon and one physician are on duty each night in readiness for any call. The house surgeon and house physician, with their respective senior assistants, are required to reside in the hospital.

The house officers are the pastor and superintendent, the house mother, assistant superintendent, a resident physician, and a resident surgeon, each with a senior and junior assistant, and an apothecary. Each ward has a "lady in charge" and a first nurse, with necessary assistants, all males. The outside medical staff includes four attending physicians and four attending surgeons, who make regular periodical visits to the several wards, four consulting physicians and four consulting surgeons, a special consulting physician in chest diseases, an orthopedic surgeon and his assistant, an ophthalmic surgeon, a laryngoscopic sur-

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"Oh," he added, after a short pause, during which he puffed his pipe violently. "They come for various reasons. I s'pose some young fellows enlist because they have had quarrels with their sweethearts. Some young fellows have been wild, and they run away from home and join the army. Occasionally an educated, refined-looking fellow will join. They generally have good reasons for it. They have been clerks, and have violated some trust or otherwise injured their reputation, or have been ruined by bad associates and are flying from them." "Don't recruits of this kind soon get tired of soldier life and desert before their time is up?" "About nine-tenths of all the new recruits desert before the first year is up. Most of them never join their regiment. There are over a hundred thousand deserters at large throughout the country now."

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