

## THE INSTITUTIONAL WORKSHOP.

### WITHIN THE HOSPITALS.

#### THREE PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS.

(By a VAGRANT CORRESPONDENT.)

##### ALNWICK INFIRMARY.

About the distance of a bowshot from the historic old border fortress and castle of Alnwick stands the infirmary. In striking contrast are the luxury and splendour of the seat of the Duke of Northumberland to the mean accommodation for the sick poor in Alnwick town. An old house in a row of old houses, only distinguishable by its name on a black board across its entrance, is the Hotel Dieu of the place. Draughty rooms, impossible firegrates, indifferent sanitary arrangements, and general old-time appointments, make up the sum total of charity for the indigent sick without the walls of the castle of the Percys, whose present owner enjoys an income of four hundred thousand pounds sterling yearly.

There are only two wards in this hospital, three beds in one and two in the other. The smaller room is for women. There is one rather startlingly new piece of furniture in the operating room of which the Matron-nurse is justly proud. It consists of a combination chair, which on touching the proverbial button turns into operating-table, dentist chair, and sofa lounge as required. This novelty is placed in a chamber strictly in keeping with its own versatility, an operating room, theatre, bath, and lavatory in one. The matron herself is also in keeping with both furniture and room, for she is alternately matron, nurse, and sister. I came to the conclusion, on leaving, that the little nurse with sympathetic face and her collie pet dog by her side were the only bright touches in that rather dreary and uncomfortable infirmary. The cottage hospital is in the opposite direction from the infirmary and some short distance outside the town. It is now unoccupied. The building is comparatively new and consists of two large wards devoted to contagious diseases.

Alnwick is between two large centres Newcastle and Edinburgh, and the most difficult and interesting surgical cases that occur are generally forwarded to the hospitals of these towns.

##### THE SIR TITUS SALT HOSPITAL.

The famous little township in the valley of the Aire, known as Saltaire, named after and built by that famous philanthropic British workman, manufacturer, millionaire, and baronet, the late Sir Titus Salt, has among its many excellent institutions a hospital, though small, equal in comfort and management to any in the three kingdoms. At the corner of one of the avenues in the model city is a small building, in the prevailing architecture of the place. On presenting my card at the door I was ushered into a bright little hall and taken into the Matron's room—a cheery, cosy sitting-room. A kettle was singing on the hob, and the nursing staff, the Matron and Sister, were taking tea. It was a cheerless afternoon without. The two ladies, in their smart nursing garb, pouring out the steaming Ceylon, made a veritable black and white picture, which seemed to thaw the icy chill the dreary winter weather had cast over me. The little hospital

was in keeping with the cosy room of the Matron-nurse. On the ground floor were the waiting-room, surgery and operating-room, and the dispensary. There were only nine beds in the wards above. The hospital originally started with six beds when it was opened in 1868, but since then one of the almshouses next door has been absorbed to the advantage of the hospital. Sir Titus Salt was very much to the front with his fine old presentation on the walls in each room; and over a child's cot was a portrait of another gentleman, to whom in many ways generous, good old Sir Titus had some resemblance, that of Santa Claus.

##### THE STOCKPORT INFIRMARY.

The outcome of a small dispensary started by the benevolence of Dr. Briscoll in 1790 is the Stockport Infirmary of to-day. Medicines were dispensed to the necessitous poor in a small cottage near Wellington Bridge for the first time just a little over one hundred years ago. One wonders that so ancient a centre as Stockport, or Stopford, as it was known in the days of the Romans, should not have had some provision for the sick poor long before Dr. Briscoll's time. Stockport, however, has made up for lost time in later years, and the infirmary to day is a very creditable institution, and a testimony to the philanthropy of its prominent citizens. Facing Wellington Road, with a small grass plat in front, the infirmary is of the architecture of the period of the later Georges, a long two-storey building with a heavy Greco stone portico in the centre. The windows in front light the rooms in the main building, which are occupied by the staff. These rooms open on to two long corridors, from which abut three wings containing the wards. The wings, which are known as pavilions, are, in virtue of that excellent system, well lighted and ventilated, and cheerful in aspect. One pavilion is occupied by women, one by children, and the other by the men. Two of the larger wards are heated by double stoves in the centre of the room, which I think is probably a better way of distributing the heat than the ordinary fashion of the stoves at either end of the ward. The Nurses and Sisters, however, do not seem to care for the fires in the centre of the wards; the pipes and stove block a general view of the beds and their occupants, and certain restless cases require the nurse to be always on the watch.

The centre pavilion has only one small ward in the upper storey. The rest of the space is taken up by the operation room. On the lower storey of this wing are the accident ward and dispensary. At the back of the pavilion are the laundry (which is admirable in its appointment) and a new disinfecting stove and chamber after the latest and most approved principles. The only drawback in the infirmary is the kitchen, which is in the central wing, and dispenses the odours of its savoury and unsavoury dishes all over the building. This trouble was only too palpable as the surgeon deputed to escort me received me at the door, and the conglomerate atmosphere of stewing meats and vegetables followed us everywhere. There are seven large wards in this infirmary, containing twelve beds each, and there are two small rooms for isolated cases. The