

Report of the Resident Secretary

For May, 1917.

At the Home, the general conditions during May have remained much the same as for the previous two months. The Spring Offensive and the consequent measures taken by the Army Medical Authorities, continue to exercise influences which are very marked in relation to the class of patients we are now receiving, and rather unfortunate as regards the shortened period of convalescence which the men are now receiving.

As explained in our April Report, the men continue to be sent here from the "acute" hospitals in a considerably earlier stage of their convalescence or recovery, so that from 75% to 80% of them still have more or less serious wounds which require careful surgical dressing once a day, and some of them twice or oftener. This is a very great change from last summer, when less than half that proportion of our patients were still in this semi-convalescent stage requiring dressings.

On the other hand, during the past two or three months there has been a considerable reduction in the number of men receiving massage. This is chiefly accounted for by two reasons. The first is that in the case of a good many of the men wounded in the Spring Offensive, they are fortunately slight, "clean," and easily healed flesh-wounds, caused mostly by machine-gun or rifle bullets, and without broken bones or lacerated muscles so that little, if any, massage after-treatment is required. The second reason, is that in the case of our more seriously wounded patients the Authorities have for the past few months, continued to discharge numbers of the men almost as soon as their fractured limbs were healed, or their wounds no longer required dressings, so that there was little or no opportunity to give the massage after-treatment, which is so highly beneficial to most of such cases.

Many of these men would have benefitted greatly by a longer stay in the Home, to enable them to have a thorough rest, and to recuperate and build up again their general health when run-down by months of hardship and exposure. This is the work for which Kingswood is so exceptionally well situated and equipped, and it seems a pity that the double pressure of the Military Authorities, on the one hand to make room for fresh casualties from the front, on the other to return cured men quickly to rejoin their regiments, does not allow many of our patients to remain so long in the Home as we should like. A curtailed convalescence sometimes means an incomplete recovery, or even a relapse.

The two Kenyon Huts have now been erected on one of the lawns close to the house. They are of waterproof canvas on a wood framework, well planned, comfortable, and capable of accommodating eight or ten men in each.

On account of the limited size of our Surgery, and the largely increased number of dressings, we have found it necessary to take the adjoining Ward (No. 2) and use it also as a Surgery and Dressings Room. The eight men who formerly occupied that Ward have been transferred to one of the Huts. They are quite pleased with their new quarters, in the fine warm weather. The other Hut remains unoccupied at present, but is ready in case of any special rush of patients, or other emergency.

Food supplies and prices continue to be a serious question for everyone. The submarine menace is now less threatening, but the world-shortage in food-stuffs is increasing, and prices of most commodities continue to rise. The numerous regulations of the Government Food Controller seem to have little effect either in increasing supplies, equalizing distribution, or keeping down prices. Fortunately the very fine weather we have had for the past month or more has brought forward vegetation of all kinds very rapidly, so that crops of grain, hay, fruit and vegetables have all greatly improved, and the prospects for the coming harvest are at present very promising.

Throughout the month of May we enjoyed a period of beautiful weather, bright, sunny and pleasantly warm, with a fresh breeze to prevent the heat from being oppressive. The English country-side is now looking its very best, with the trees, hedges and meadows all so fresh and green. The grounds and meadows of Kingswood are also at their best now. The rich mass of blossoms on the giant chestnut trees, the white and pink "May" or hawthorn on the hedges, the scarlet rhododendrons in the shrubberies, the wall-flowers, forget-me-nots, and other spring flowers in the borders, the fresh green lawns, and the meadows with sheep and lambs grazing, cuckoos calling, skylarks, thrushes and other birds singing, all combine to make up an ideal picture of rural England, which it would be difficult to equal anywhere.

Our Canadians, and especially members of the Staff, had many hard things to say against the raw cold of the English winter, but they