

The Rockwood Review

CHRISTMAS AT ROCKWOOD.

Xmas weather was all that it should have been—a little of everything that goes to make up a perfect winter's day—a proper amount of sunshine—not too much snow—a reasonable temperature and everything else to match. On Xmas eve it looked as if nearly every patient had been provided for, but on Xmas morning presents still kept arriving and when to these were added the gifts purchased with money provided by good people who did not neglect the friendly ones—no one was forgotten. A formal tree was dispensed with and the gifts quietly distributed in the wards—an arrangement which gets over the confusion likely to develop when the six hundred parcels are handed out at one time. Nothing happened to mar the success of the day. The dinner was a bountiful one in which turkey and plum pudding of course, played the important part at one end of the forks and spoons and the patients at the other. To the smokers cigars were distributed afterwards, and caudies, nuts and oranges were given to everybody. It would puzzle even the head of an extraordinary large family to make the arrangements for the Xmas celebration of a household containing seven hundred, and yet that is the annual problem at Rockwood. Six hundred patients and about a hundred employees make up the list.

At night the large Amusement Hall, lighted most brilliantly by electricity, contained an audience of five hundred and fifty and a particularly selected programme

was presented. The orchestra under the leadership of Mr Arbuckle proved a great success, and the preponderance of strings over brass is a decided improvement, enabling the performers to give the delicate shadings so necessary to instrumental as well as other music. Miss Pugh was particularly clever in her recitation and held the attention of the audience until the end of her selection.

Mr. W. Woods was enthusiastically encored in his coon song and the encore proved even better than the original. Of course, Mr. Billy Shea was just as great a favorite as ever with the crowd and made a decided hit with his encore, "Any old place to hang my hat, is home sweet home for me."

Master Charlie Offord was very happy in his rendition of the Xmas Hymn.

Dr. Clarke and Miss Clarke played a dainty classical selection and Miss Margery Clarke a piano solo—but the enthusiasm reached its height when the ever popular Rev. Father Macdonald sang "O Holy Night." Father Macdonald is beloved by all creeds and all classes in Portsmouth, and is well entitled to his popularity. The first part of the programme was ended by selections from "Princess Chic" by the Orchestra. The music of this delightful Comic Opera is always pleasing.

The Farce, "How to Tame a Mother-in-Law" ended the performance. Many people are interested in this question and the solution proposed seemed to answer admirably in this instance at least.