



Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability Archive Service :  
Digital copy

ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR NEURO-DISABILITY :  
Fundraising : Appeals : Christmas Appeals

Letters from Home

Ref No : GB 3544 RHN-FU-2-3-32

Part 2



### "FOLLOW THE GLEAM."

**T**HIS Haven of Rest for sick folk stands on a hill in its own grounds, close to Putney Heath, and, for those of us who are interested in such things, there are many historic spots to be seen in the neighbourhood. At the Hospital itself, we can sit out-of-doors all the year round, and from one of the verandahs we have a glorious view across fields and orchards—acres of apple, plum and pear blossom in Spring—right away to Epsom and the Surrey hills.

All the patients are encouraged in every way to take an interest in some wholesome occupation or hobby. In the Male Patients' Wing there is a work-room, where much wonderful work is done, often by crippled and feeble fingers.

This being an undenominational Home, there are many groups of religious thought represented, but (and this is another blessing) there is no coercion to force patients to accept any one particular form of thought: each one is free to "follow the gleam" that has been revealed to him or her, and our freedom from any sectarian bitterness is no doubt partly due to our Chaplain's daily prayers that "the peace of God may rest upon us."

I've often heard it said, "What a happy-looking crowd you are!" When subscribers see us I hope they feel repaid for their kind thoughts toward us, which have materialised into £ s. d. for the upkeep of the Home.

J. M.



A PATIENT.



### TIME PASSES QUICKLY.

**T**o write a letter from this Hospital and Home, narrating my own experience, is a pleasure—and a responsibility! I have been an inmate for nine years, and I am convinced that we should not find a more beautiful nor a more delightfully situated Home anywhere in the United Kingdom. During the summer I revel in being wheeled round the grounds in my comfortable chair (which is provided by the Home) and in having tea with friends under the lovely old trees; such delights are very real to us. It is the general belief of those leading a busy life that the time must seem very long to us, having to sit or lie in our chairs all day. Not so; we all agree that the time passes very quickly. There is so much to attract one's attention and to help the long day through.

E. H.



### HOME FROM HOME.

I CAME to Putney about twenty-four years ago, a lonely stranger, having out-lived my family and "spent all that I had and was nothing bettered," to find a very real "Home from Home." Not knowing to what I was coming, I asked the Lord to "choose my bed," and He did.

The few home treasures we are allowed to bring, and visitors every day (*and to tea!*) make life here so homely. The food is liberal, and suited to our various ills. As to clothing, there is an annual Sale of Work, to which all patients who can work contribute. The proceeds of the Sale enable us to buy little "extras."

Personally, I can never be too grateful for being led here, nor for the kindness received from *everyone*.

P. M. P.



A PATIENT



## A CHOIR.

**S**AID the Bard of Avon : "If music be the food of love, play on."

I had not been at Putney many months when I was startled by the following question : "Don't you think it possible to start a DRAMATIC CLUB?" I looked at the lady to see if she were joking, but she was quite serious. Think of the pathos of this question as it struck me at the time. Two hundred and fifty patients, seated in wheel-chairs, bruised and broken on the Wheel of Life, and many twisted and bent like a reed after a storm. These, or many of them, aching to express themselves and grasping at any idea as will a drowning man at a straw. A Dramatic Club was not to be thought of, for how could these people act in chairs? Even supposing it were possible to write special "sketches" for them, think what it would be to view!

These folk wanted something and so I took a week to think it over. Then the idea came to me—a Choir! I looked round for material, and this is what I found : twelve ladies who had not sung for years, a few of whom could read music : this was my first choir.

Now, out of these beginnings nine years ago has grown a choir that could be broadcast on the Wireless as the only choir of its kind in the world : firstly, each member is an acute and incurable invalid : secondly, all sing seated, both choir and conductor doing their work from wheel-chairs. The choir, now twenty-five strong, is singing really well and is regularly assisted by soloists who have sung in the largest public concert halls. We have performed seven cantatas and a large cupboardful of part-songs, and we give two two-hour concerts in the season, as well as carols. F. C.



### A PICNIC.

**E**VERY morning the patients who are able to leave their bed-rooms are brought downstairs in wheel-chairs or upon couches by means of electric lifts and are taken to the sitting-rooms or verandahs to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. Before coming to the Home, many of the more helpless patients had lain in bed for years, having had no convenience to be "got up," much less to be taken out-of-doors. In summer-time some of us even go out occasionally to enjoy a picnic on Wimbledon Common.

Our religious services and the Bible class are always well attended and much appreciated. Some of the inmates had not been able to attend Divine Service for many years until they came to Putney.

H. P.



A PATIENT.

### VERY GRATEFUL.

**W**HEN I came here nearly eight years ago I saw so many very much worse than myself and it made me sad and depressed, so that I did not notice so much the beauty then, but only as time went on and I settled down to the life in such a vast place. When one realises that one is incurable and becoming worse and must give up work, and, therefore, independence, it is not easy to settle down to the life of a chronic invalid. Still, I am very grateful to be here.

The sitting-rooms here are very large and beautiful, but (in the Winter, at any rate) very full, because there are so many more who come down now, which, I think, is very nice for them. When I have been in bed for a few days I am so glad I am not a bed-ridden patient.

I could write more, only my hands are too painful.  
S. B.



### FOR LIFE.

I FELT worse about coming here than I felt when I went into a London general hospital, as there it was for only a week or two, but here it was for life! However, I was received so kindly, tea was all ready for me, and the other patients gave me such a warm welcome, that I soon felt quite at home.

One does not expect to be cured here, but if there is a possibility of improvement the Doctor suggests special treatment: my joints were very contracted, so I was advised to have them bent under an anæsthetic, and now, after much perseverance, I am able to get about a little. Had this not been done I should have been quite crippled.

We always appreciate the visitors who come to sing and play to us in the afternoons, especially during the Winter, when we cannot get out: it breaks the monotony of an invalid's life, which cannot be altogether avoided.

People have often said to me that they would like to subscribe something towards the £50,000 required for the upkeep of the Home and its hundreds upon hundreds of pensions, but that they could not afford it. I cannot help thinking, however, that if it occurred to them that half-a-guinea a year works out at less than 2½d. a week they might, perhaps, afford that small amount. What a difference it would make if they could!

I. H.



THE CHAPLAIN.



### A LITTLE BACK ROOM.

I AM an aged woman now and rheumatoid arthritis affects my poor old joints, as it has done for many years. It is no longer possible for me to kneel and say my prayers, but I still say them morning, noon and night, and my first humble plea is that God may bless and prosper those who keep going this great Institution.

Before I came to Putney life was a burden to me and to my few relatives. I lived in a little back room, where I was often left for many hours at a time without a soul to speak to, because those upon whom I depended had to work hard to make ends meet. My life in those days was dark and miserable, although when I was younger, and my father was alive, we had a nice home. Now my days are again full and peaceful ones and I am able to enjoy the comforts of a great and noble place.

I often wonder what encouragement the nursing staff get from some of us, for the life of a nurse who waits upon Incurables must be discouraging in many ways, as she sees no physical improvement in the condition of those for whom she does so much. What would happen to us all were the spring of human sympathy to dry up, or if some other unlooked for and lamentable change took place? I pray again and again that the tender-hearted public may have their minds opened to the *inestimable good* they are doing by keeping afloat this merciful work—this Lifeboat!

E. G.



### NO REGRETS.

I BECAME a patient here about six years ago, having lost my husband, who had become blind, through an accident. I was then living quite alone, and when I found myself becoming very much more helpless (having suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for twenty-eight years) I decided to apply for admission to this Home. I have never regretted that step.

If there are any reading this who have never paid us a visit, I would ask them to do so. There is always someone who would be pleased to show them over the Hospital.

I should like to write more, but my hands are so crippled that I suffer a good deal of pain and get cramp badly, so that I have to give up. K. S.



A PATIENT IN HER HOME-LIKE CORNER.



## SMILES AND TEARS.

**T**HE patients at the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables are not, as may be supposed, a grumpy and discontented lot of people. Smiles are not unknown, nor even rare. Like all places where there are hundreds of men and women gathered together, Smiles and Tears follow each other. My experience of life before I came to Putney was that there were often tears where there was but little sorrow, and now that I am here, in a Home for Incurables, I find that there are many sorrows and few tears. The reason for this is that we have learnt to bear pain with fortitude ; we know that tears are usually unavailing, and that it pays one to keep up one's good spirits. Were we to adopt any other attitude we should be ungrateful indeed. "Smiles form the channel of a future tear," Byron said. Yet many of our smiles are the foundation of real contentment. We have learnt our limitations and we have come to regard them as inevitable. We know we might have been placed in much worse circumstances than we are, and there is true happiness in realising how much more cause we might have for misery ! We are proud of our Putney Home and its great traditions and we try to add harmony to its atmosphere by smiling at our troubles.

M. C.



### THE FUNNY SIDE.

**M**y feeling on entering this Home five years ago was one of great thankfulness and contentment to be free from all the worry and struggle of trying to manage and keep going, with my ever increasing helplessness. Healthy people perhaps do not realise what very helpless creatures we are, nor the shifts one is put to, even to pass or to reach a piece of work or to put anything to one's mouth. If we have a sense of humour and can see the funny side, the tears are repressed and we try again, smiling.

I am indeed very glad to be here. By bed-time one has often had more change in a day than perhaps one would get in a month at home. Like generally meets like and many a laugh and joke pass the time.

L. H. T.



A PATIENT.



"SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE."

WHEN I caught my first glimpse of the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney, that was to be my home for the future, I thought, "What a *fine* building!" little thinking how soon I should be turning "fine" into "beautiful." This, I think, was brought about by witnessing daily the loving care bestowed on those who so sorely need it; the blind folk especially have always had my sympathy, but here I found that not only sympathy was extended to them, but *all the loving help* these cases so much need, especially as their blindness is "aggravated" by other complaints.

Among the pleasures our blind friends cannot fully share with us are such events as a Garden Party provided for us from time to time. Strawberries and cream, cake and pastries *and* ice-cream there were in plenty for those of us who could digest such things, and we have had the treat of seeing some of our elderly—yet ever young—Committee men skittling the coconuts off their resting-places in the Coconut-Shy Alley. Members of our Authorised Lady Visitors were also to be seen strolling about and adding to the animation of the occasion. We have also had the boys of the Royal Caledonian Schools at Bushey, with their Band of Pipers and Dancers, whose agility and lung power caused us poor old cripples to "sit up and take notice" *and* applaud. In fact, the whole thing was carried out in just that loving way with which the Committee generally treat us.

B. J. C.



### WORTH WHILE.

**W**HAT a volume of reading an enumeration of all the blessings of one's life would make!

I should like just to mention our Services. In a large Institution like this it is an immense comfort to feel that, although we are of so many sects, yet all are thought of and arranged for. Our good Chaplain is so large-hearted and universally kind. We know, also, that, if we are in any difficulty, we can go to the Matron and that she will give us a willing ear and good advice.

You know the following, but the fact bears repetition: many of us improve in health after coming here, and, although we cannot hope for full restoration, the improvement makes us very thankful and life becomes more "worth while." We value very highly all that is done for us. M. A. W.



A PATIENT.



## A FAIR PLACE.

A FRIEND wrote to me, "I wonder you are not more depressed than you are. You have so much pain; you are shut out from the zest of the fight, the thrills of the struggle outside, even if you escape its toil and worry." She little realised how we, too, struggle—for patience to bear and for patience to remain inactive.

I remember a frosty Easter evening long ago when I leaned from an open window to gaze at the sparkling stars, and cried in my heart, "My lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground: yea, I have a goodly heritage." Since then—in health and youth—I have said that many times and thought that I appreciated the blessings of life. Now I know that I did not even begin to realise how much was mine.

For the past twenty-seven months I have known that I am "an Incurable"; yet last night, after some hours of gnawing pain, when temporary rest had come, I looked up at the stars once more and found I still could say, with sincerity, that my lot is cast in a fair place: indeed, for one in my condition, I am certain there can be no fairer place on the earth. Here at Putney my mind is at rest; my eyes see beauty without and kind faces within.

I wish one could make strangers realise that it is not so trying an ordeal to visit us as may appear. Friends who come here diffidently, apprehensively, afraid of what they may see, go away determined to come again soon, if only for the tonic of seeing smiling faces, hearing cheerful conversation, watching kindly acts done, being surrounded by grateful hearts.

Everything possible is done here to alleviate our physical ills and to supply us with spiritual food;



but the hard fact remains that "gardens are not made By singing 'Oh, how beautiful!' and sitting in the shade." Ours is a very beautiful "garden," but it will not remain so unless it is replanted from time to time and regularly watered. And we, to whom this "garden" means everything, can do little more than "sit in the shade" and pray that the time will never come when the heritage which is ours, thank God, through the loving labour of generations of "gardeners," will slip back to a wilderness where there is no shelter and no resting-place for Incurables.

M. W.

**Remittance Form**

To SIR HENRY LOPES, BART., *Treasurer,*  
ROYAL HOSPITAL AND HOME FOR INCURABLES, PUTNEY,  
BOND COURT HOUSE, WALBROOK E.C. 4.

*From*

Address

Enclosed you will find a \_\_\_\_\_ for £\_\_\_\_\_

which \_\_\_\_\_ send you as {  
an Annual Subscription } in aid of the funds of the  
a Donation  
a Life Subscription }

(Signed)

CHEQUES TO BE CROSSED "Marr. GLYN, MILLS & CO."

**Inquiries are invited from intending subscribers.**



**BANKERS' ORDER.**

Messrs. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 192 \_\_\_\_\_

*Please pay now and annually to the A/c of the Royal Hospital and  
Home for Incurables, Putney, at Messrs. Glyn, Mills & Co., the sum of*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Guineas.*

*£* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ :







