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

Letters from Home

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Part 1

LETTERS FROM HOME:



RHN/FU/2/3/32

**LETTERS
FROM HOME.**

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Christmas, 1927.

LETTERS
FROM HOME

FIRESIDE THOUGHTS.

*Flick'ring flames, now high, now low—
Dear, dead days come back to mind ;
Voices of the long ago
Sing above the moaning wind.*

*Glowing embers, deep and red—
Yearnings from their radiance dart :
Would that I some warmth might spread.
Is true kindness in my heart ?*

*Tiny sparks from out the bars
'Mid the fireside glow I see,
Flashing like long-faded stars
Hope is in the heart of me.*

W. SPENCER LEEMING.

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I bequeath to THE ROYAL HOSPITAL AND HOME FOR INCURABLES, PUTNEY, the sum of £ , free of duty, to be paid, together with the duty thereon, out of such part of my estate as can be lawfully bequeathed for charitable purposes, and to be applicable to the general purposes of such Institution, and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer for the time being of such Institution shall be a sufficient discharge for the same.

N.B.—By virtue of the " Mortmain and Charitable Uses Act, 1891," land may now be devised to a Charity, but it is liable to be sold within one year from the death of the Testator.

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VIEW OF MAIN ENTRANCE.

In Memoriam.

WHY NOT COMMEMORATE THE PRECIOUS MEMORY OF THOSE DEAR TO YOU BY GIVING MONEY FOR NAMING IN PERPETUITY A BED, OR A WARD, AT THE ROYAL HOSPITAL AND HOME FOR INCURABLES, PUTNEY, A MEANS WHICH WOULD NOT ONLY BE A LASTING TRIBUTE TO THE DEPARTED, BUT ALSO PROVIDE THE ADDITIONAL MERIT OF AFFORDING RELIEF TO THOSE WHO ARE WORTHY OBJECTS FOR SUCH PRACTICAL SYMPATHY? A BED WILL BE NAMED IN PERPETUITY FOR THE SUM OF £1,000. A PENSION FOR AN INCURABLE WILL BE NAMED IN PERPETUITY FOR THE SUM OF £500.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION

An Annual Subscriber has One Vote for Half-a-Guinea, and an additional Vote for every additional Half-a-Guinea. A Life Subscriber has One Vote for Life for Five Guineas, and an additional Vote for Life for every additional Five Guineas.

Subscriptions received at the Office, Bond Court House, Walbrook, E.C. 4, by the Secretary, to whom all Orders should be made payable; by the Treasurer; and by Messrs. Glyn, Mills & Co., 67, Lombard Street, E.C. 3.

It may surprise some readers to learn that the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney, is denied a share in the annual distribution from the King Edward's Hospital Fund and the Saturday and Sunday Collections for the Hospitals. Not one penny from these Funds ever finds its way to this Charity. The main reason for this is that the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney, does not cure patients, a task which it would naturally not pretend to undertake since it only accepts cases which have already been discharged as incurable by other hospitals, or certified as incurable by two doctors. Surely the fact that this hospital is denied a share in the distribution of these Funds lends added claim upon the generosity of the public.

The Hospital is not quite a mile from East Putney Railway Station (District Railway), where cabs are obtainable. Putney Station (Southern Railway) is rather more than a mile distant. Motor omnibuses (Services Nos. 51 and 85) run from Putney Bridge Station (District Railway) to the top of Putney Hill, which is within three minutes' walk of the Hospital.



THE MATRON.

"The earth has nothing like a she epistle"
(Byron).

THESE LETTERS.

All the letters in this little book are from Incurables! From Incurables who pass long years in faith and patience.

A letter may be a rebuff or a caress. A day may be made or unmade for us by a letter. Some letters contain magical words that will not wait. Real appeal amounts in letters to courtship: to court, to woo, to persuade.

The Board of Management of the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney, spend £50,000 a year in relieving nine hundred men and women who are necessitous—and grateful for practical sympathy. Of that £50,000 only one-fifth is assured income; the remaining £40,000 has to come from *voluntary sources*.

The right sort of letter (with an enclosure) is ever welcome.

DEPRESSION BANISHED.

THE great enemy in a Home for Incurables is Depression, which is not only a great enemy, but a common one, and, alas! one that often wins the battle. The Slough of Despond is a pushing companion, but in fighting it regularly one learns to keep it at bay sometimes: the frustration of darkness can often be achieved by those well practised in the art.

Incurables would have a gloomy outlook indeed were it not for the light behind all the kind faces and the generous actions of those who help to lift a heavy load, and the belief that it is darkest before the dawn buoys up many an unconquerable spirit. An Incurable has to be forgiven much, and when gratitude is not always so apparent as it might be our friends must please try to understand the heavy cross some of us bear.

Life down here at Putney is made as pleasant as it can be and the willing and ready service of those who serve means much to those who suffer and wait. A mere sermon, to a man suffering from the pangs of hunger, is but cold comfort, and the cup of water that is out of reach of the thirsty tends only to accentuate his parched condition. Some of us cannot write a letter without summoning up memories of days of depression, but, thank God, those days are past and things are never so bad as they might be while one has a nook in this Home.

A. C.



TWO PATIENTS WHO HELPED TO MAKE A TABLE-COVER WHICH WAS GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED BY H.R.H. THE PRINCESS MARY.

A NEW SIGNIFICANCE.

THE Spring has a way of reviving memories and my thoughts have reverted to three years ago, when I alternated between hopes and fears as to the outcome of the May Election ; but success came and soon I was admitted to the Home, where, coming as I did from the country, I was pleasantly surprised to find the air suited me splendidly, and this, combined with the real interest taken in my case and the inestimable privilege of being allowed to continue open-air treatment, helped me to combat my intense weakness, so that within a few weeks *I was sitting in a chair for the first time in eight years !* Since then, with the kindly encouragement always extended to me by those concerned, I have progressed steadily, and, though still an Incurable, life has now a new significance—it seems so much brighter and more interesting in every way. My fears have proved groundless and my hopes have come true

E. C. S.

A PATIENT FOR FIFTY-EIGHT YEARS.

I HAVE been intensely happy from the first day of my coming here, FIFTY-EIGHT years ago, when only a girl just turned seventeen. My father and mother were getting very infirm and my mother had met with a serious accident. You can imagine how concerned they were for my future welfare and how thankful they were when I became elected for this Home! Formerly they were nearly heart-broken, wondering what would become of me should they be called away first.

I am as happy as the days are long here at Putney. All the members of the House Committee and the kind Authorised Lady Visitors I know so well and they have been the essence of kindness to me. God has been very good in providing such a beautiful Home.

M. J. C.



A BED-RIDDEN PATIENT.

AS A FLOWER WAKENS.

ONE of my favourite books is in letter form and would that I had the power to make a letter "speak."

Before coming as a patient, I knew of Putney only as a starting place for the Boat Race! No one could help me even to imagine the life of the many invalids here, but I did gather ideas of "beautiful grounds," of "a bed-ridden patient at last being able to sit up" and of "sports where patients took part." Such was my world-to-be—in the clouds completely.

As we drove through the big entrance gates the old world vanished—sight and hearing became dim. It was evening, and, entering a big corridor apparently dark, there appeared from somewhere a light, a gentle greeting, and we passed on and on. Then we were in a room, not with an endless row of beds—the only furniture in my clouds—but a bright, airy, small ward, with Sister and nurse to make each patient comfortable. Last, but not least, there stands out in the memory of that haze, at the foot of my bed, a friendly sister-patient hoping I would be happy with them. Her head was turned away; then all vanished with the clouds and into the night.

During the following days I found the sun shining as of old and met more bright smiles than one does in the work-a-day world. As a flower wakens, so does a heart with this warmth. Thus was I drawn into the life and working of a whole new body of being. In one, it is Hospital and Home—there are all the necessities of a hospital, and for those in a better state of health there is the freedom of home.

N. P.

ALL VERY HUMAN.

It is only those who have gone through the awful experience of being told by several specialists that their case is hopeless who can realise what this Home means to us. The knowledge that one has a good home for life, no rent to pay, no worrying bills coming in, is a tremendous relief.

The members of our Board, who are all very kindly and genial gentlemen, pay us frequent visits and are always willing to listen to any suggestion that may add to our comfort and happiness, and they and the whole staff do their very best to make it a real and happy Home for us all. Then we are all seen regularly by the Authorised Lady Visitors, a committee of active ladies who take a pleasure in listening to our little suggestions and in helping to remove any small grievances, real or imagined, that we may have.

Please don't run away with the notion that we are a body of saints : we are all very human, but in our hearts are truly grateful for all the comforts and many blessings that we enjoy in our "Home on the Hill." Please pay us a visit and judge for yourselves.

C. B.



A PATIENT.

AS HAPPY AS POSSIBLE.

My friend and I have lived in the same room for over ten years and have always been very happy together. There is a dear old lady in our ward who has been in the Home for fifty years (we call her Auntie Annie), and whose chief delight lies in a visit on a Wednesday from some of our Committee gentlemen, and we three form a happy little trio. The bright, airy rooms, the friendly nurses, the periodical entertainments and social parties, also our choral class, all help to keep us cheerful, and we often discover humorous asides, even here in a Home for Incurables! At times illness takes an extra hold upon us, but prompt and very kind attention night and day helps us greatly to bear the pain. We always feel we have a very great deal for which to be thankful and that it behoves us to be as happy as possible and so to help in any little way we can those whose duty it is to look after us. Such is the way my friend and I look at things.

L. B.

HELPING OTHERS.

MY life here is a much FULLER one than ever I could have had in my own home, though, at the same time, of course, it is largely what we make it ourselves. One has great opportunities of helping others, especially the ones who are tied, as it were, to their wheel-chairs.

Each time I go away for a holiday and return to Putney I realise more and more how difficult it is for those outside to meet the many demands on their purses and I am more than grateful to be spared all this financial worry.

May our Heavenly Father continue to put into the hearts of His people the realisation of the need for supporting our great National Home for Incurables at Putney.
M. P.



A PATIENT.

A CHEERFUL OUTLOOK.

THE Putney Home for Incurables is ideal and nothing is too great or good to say about it. I was six years in bed in lodgings (I've no relations) and was dipping deeply into my small savings for board, lodging, laundry, lighting, etc., and if I did not now say THANK GOD, in capital letters, I should be a most ungrateful person. The days are not long enough to get through all one wants to—the longer one is here the more one feels one's personal responsibility : I mean, one realises more and more that one ought to try to live up to the high standard of life that would be worthy of all that is being done for us. I try to check all gossip and to keep in mind the countless benefits and exceeding kindnesses bestowed on ALL here and so to encourage everybody around me to maintain a cheerful outlook on life.

E. B.

BEST OF ITS KIND.

I HAVE been an inmate of the Royal Hospital and Home, Putney, for twenty years and I can speak with deep gratitude of the life we spend here, and quite believe it is the very best of the kind in institutional life. I must admit that home life with one's own kin is really very sweet, but, at the same time, it is a great relief to know, in our helpless condition, that we are not a tax and anxiety to our outside friends. On the whole, there are very few restrictions or rules—only those really necessary for carrying on such a vast community as we are—and I can only repeat what I have said before, that life at the Royal Hospital and Home is the very best of its kind and a real and true benefit to those of us who are in it.

L. H.



THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

I FAIL AND FAIL AGAIN.

OLIVER CROMWELL once said, "Paint me as I am. If you leave out the scars and the wrinkles, I will pay you not a shilling." Some Incurables, I think, are inclined to show only the bright and pleasant side to our visitors and correspondents. I do not blame those who would have others suppose that all is well, but I do believe, with Oliver Cromwell, that we ought to let our friends know something about the "scars and wrinkles." Believe me, we who live in the Home for Incurables, at Putney, have many "scars and wrinkles"; were it not so, we should have no right to be here. We have many blemishes, also, in our dispositions; our shortcomings refuse to be hidden in all-too-many instances. Long illness, sleepless nights, aches and pains, are apt to make one irritable and crotchety. Some of us complain when there is little to complain about, and, speaking for myself, I find that I have not the angelic disposition that I admire so much in some of those with whom I come in contact and that I discover in the characters of those about whom I read in many books. I try to be patient and long-suffering and optimistic, but, alas, I fail and fail again. Still, I must be honest and admit that life has for me many compensations and all are due to the fact that I am a patient here in the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney. Were I to go back to the dingy room from which I came straight to Putney, I should pray for death. Here, life is made far more tolerable for me.

M. M.

CONTENTED AND GRATEFUL.

AFTER my husband's death and before I came here, my life was one of profound anxiety and worry as to ways and means, and everything was so expensive, but directly I was fortunate enough to be admitted to the Home I seemed to shift my heavy burdens on to other and stronger shoulders and I have never had occasion to take them up again. I can feel nothing but great, devout thankfulness for the comforts and constant consideration shown to us here. I am very contented and grateful and think the Board of Management and the Governors are indeed carrying on a wonderfully great and good work, and I can only pray that wisdom and strength may be given to each and all as they need it.

L. B.



A PATIENT AND HER "WALKING MACHINE."

SHELTER FOR FEEBLE FEET.

As a newcomer to this beautiful Home my outstanding impressions were: the kind and hearty reception given on entry; the wonderful lifts; the size and comfort and splendid organisation of the Institution; the look of patience and contentment on the faces of the dear suffering ones, who try to be bright and brave; the abundance of lovely roses, the birds, the large shady trees, the smooth green lawns where the staff play tennis; the organ—what a noble gift it has proved: it takes one's thoughts upwards. God bless all who work for this place and may the Founder's name ever be honoured for his kindly thought of this Shelter for the lonely, frail and crippled.

H. M. B.