

Hospital Notables.

MR. W. H. CROSS,

Secretary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

A VISITOR entering the beautiful Smithfield Gate of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, after passing the Chapel, would pass between two official-looking business-like structures—the steward's and the renter's offices.

In a large, pleasant room behind the latter there is a busy brain at work, and a genial, kindly man—Mr. Cross, the subject of our sketch—always ready with a wise sympathy to help to ravel out tangles and troubles which may arise in any department of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

When the history of this picturesque old Institution comes to be written, the name of Mr. Cross will shine out as a "notable," notable no less for the genial, kindly qualities which have inspired the utmost respect and affection for him among all the workers in his community, than for the skill and ability with which he has conducted the affairs of the Hospital.

Mr. Cross was educated at Christ's Hospital, and very early showed the business-like qualities which have made him so invaluable at Bart's. "He actually revelled in arithmetic, and carried off most of the prizes in that subject," said one who knew him in his school days. This circumstance, combined with the honourableness of his character, induced the authorities of Christ's Hospital to give him a position in the counting house of the Institution. While at work there his ambition prompted him to attend the London University, where he graduated B.A.

On his appointment to St. Bartholomew's, twenty-nine years ago—time has dealt very gently with Mr. Cross, and one needs official proof to believe he has been there so long—there was much re-organisation needed in every department. It will be interesting to point to some of the conditions under which the Nurses did their work, at a time when Dickens' description of how the sick were cared for was contemporary history.

In those days the large wards were in the charge of a Sister and three Nurses, and these divided the day and night work between them, so that every third night one Nurse had about twenty hours on duty. There were no "ladies who do the scrubbing," and the Nurse in charge more often than not spent a good part of the night on hands and knees, scrubbing the

ward floors. At that time the whole female staff consisted of less than 120. To-day it reaches the total of 320, with the same number of patients. Uncooked rations were served out to the Nurses, who cooked for themselves. There were no definite holidays or "times off." Many of the staff went for years without a holiday.

Mr. Cross has been an active helper in the Nursing reforms which have taken place in these fifteen years. The first step in the progress of Nursing took place when Probationers were introduced, in May, 1877. The old Bart's uniform consisted of a dark brown stuff—the Sisters wearing blue. The fashion of the caps and aprons was left to the taste and "sweet will" of the Nurse. It is a significant point in Mr. Cross's career at Bartholomew's, that while so much reform and re-organisation has been carried out during

his tenure of office, there has been no friction or ill-feeling. All the progressive steps have been taken with so much tact and sympathy, and so guided by that liberal kindness which is one of Mr. Cross's leading characteristics, that opposition and ill-will gave way. At many of the leading London Hospitals Nursing reforms were made, as it were, at the point of the sword, and have been accompanied by more or less of revolutions; but Bart's has none of this in its history.

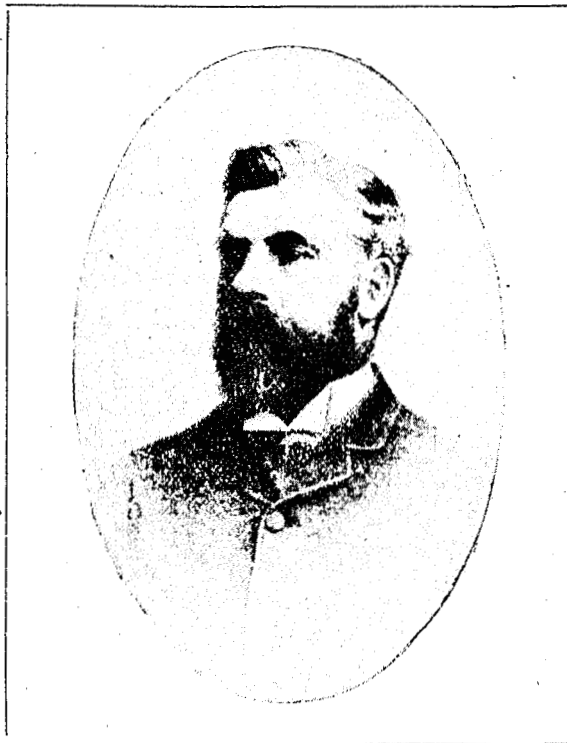
During Mr. Cross's term of office the resources of the Hospital have developed enormously. All matters connected with the Hospital estates pass through his hands, and the fact of his having been called to the Bar—the Inner Temple—has added much to the value of his services to the Hospital, at least, from the legal aspect. Some three years since the Governors of the Hospital

arranged that Mr. Cross should occupy the Treasurer's house, a step taken with a view to point out that Mr. Cross is their deputy, and is responsible in their absence for the conduct of affairs.

In the year 1890 Mr. Cross received a signal mark of the honourable estimation in which he is held when he was constituted co-trustee with the late Sir William Savory and Mr. Peter Reid of a sum of £200,000, of which Mr. Reid himself contributed £150,000 to found the Hospital Convalescent Home at Parkwood, Swanley. To be selected for such a trust reflected credit not only on Mr. Cross, but upon the Hospital whose officer he is.

It is interesting to note how Mr. Cross's family have imbibed a love of the Hospital. Two of his sons have joined the medical profession, and three of his daughters hold hospital posts, one of them distinguished at Bart's as a gold medallist and as the present Sister of Lucas Ward.

A. K.



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