

The Hospital World.**THE ROYAL SOUTH HANTS AND SOUTH-HAMPTON HOSPITAL.**

On the 7th February, 1900, the chrysalis Royal South Hants Infirmary emerged as the butterfly Royal South Hants and Southampton Hospital. Since 1898 the luckless institution had been in the hands of builders and architects, who had hammered and delved, and chipped and carved, and raised scaffoldings and pulled them down again, overhauled drains, knocked holes in walls for new windows, destroyed staircases to raise fresh ones, and brought the matron and resident staff—medical and nursing—to the verge of despair with the inevitable dust, and racket, and dirt, attendant on building.

But on the 7th all was forgotten and forgiven—the Infirmary renovated, altered, enlarged and improved out of all knowledge, might now well rank as one of the finest provincial hospitals in the South of England, and H.R.H. the Princess Beatrice was coming to declare the new Jubilee Wing open, and so place the coping stone on the work. H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught had originally announced his intention of performing the opening ceremony; but, in his absence in Ireland, the Princess Beatrice graciously consented to take his place.

The Princess, who was attended by the Hon. Sylvia Edwardes and Major the Hon. H. F. Colborne, crossed from Cowes in the royal yacht *Alberta*, arriving at the Southampton pier about 2.30, where she was met by the Mayor and Corporation, in their robes, and duly welcomed with the usual loyal address. From the pier to the Infirmary there is a drive of about two miles, and the greater part of High Street, which runs through the unique old Bar Gate, the pride of Southampton, being "up," the Princess had to come by a circuitous route, and was afforded an excellent opportunity of seeing the less imposing streets of Southampton. Indeed, the Royal South Hants and Southampton Hospital (I love to give it its full new title), which originally stood in fields, now stands in a very back street, which has grown up round it—and its imposing frontage overlooks some very humble dwellings. At the entrance of the Hospital Her Royal Highness was received by the President, Lord Montague of Beaulieu, the Chairman, Colonel Willan, the late Chairman, Colonel Grimston, the Bishop of Guildford, and members of the Committee and the Staff, and in the entrance hall by the remainder of the Committee and Medical Staff, various friends of the institution, the Matron and Sisters.

Her Royal Highness then passed into the Board room, where members of the Committee and of the Medical Staff were presented to her, and, at her special command, the Matron and Sisters of the Hospital.

The Princess, escorted by the President, the Chairman, members of the Medical Staff, and the Matron, then inspected the old wards of the Hospital. She spoke most graciously and kindly to several of the patients, frequently asking for particulars as she went round, and was apparently really interested in what she saw. For instance, when in passing from a lower to an upper ward, Her Royal Highness was shewn up a rather narrow winding staircase, she paused half-way to say, that the staircase must be very awkward to carry sick persons up, and

was sensibly relieved to hear they could be taken another way.

The children in the childrens' ward, which is (until the new wards shall have been opened) in a very makeshift kind of place, were eager in their best pink jackets and white pinafores "to see the Princess," and she kindly did go over to see them, right through a basement that was far from a "show place," and was most sympathetic and charming to them. I wonder if Princesses know how proud patients, little and big, are, when they speak to them, how they remember it for ever after and tell their friends with huge delight.

From the Childrens' Ward the Princess passed back to the front hall and down the handsome passage that leads to the almost perfect operation block, all lined with opalite and glittering with copper coils and brass taps—and the new wing. After Her Royal Highness had admired the operating theatre she inspected the upper new ward (named Grimston, after the late chairman), which was fully equipped and furnished down to the pewter mugs for the Tommies' beer, in expectation of the wounded soldiers. But the ways of a War Office are strange and dilatory beyond the understanding of ordinary human beings, and the Tommies had not yet arrived!

The Princess seemed pleased with the scarlet blankets, the huge fire places, and the cheery ward that was bright with palms and flowers; indeed, she was heard to observe that she would like to be ill here herself. She also spoke some words of appreciation to Mr. Garton—who has generously given over £7,000 towards the new wards—before she descended to the lower ward (named Garton after him), which had been fitted with a platform, and decorated with palms and flags for the opening ceremony.

After Her Royal Highness had taken her seat on the platform amongst the members of the Committee and their wives, etc., Colonel Willan, the Chairman, gave a clear and concise account of the new buildings, their cost, and the details of their erection, and the financial difficulties that had been surmounted, finally asking the Princess to declare the new wards open. Her Royal Highness, who spoke very distinctly, then said: "I have great pleasure in declaring this new wing open under the title of the Victoria Jubilee Wing, and that the ward in which we are now assembled shall be called the Garton Ward, and the upper one the Grimston Ward." Then everyone cheered. The Bishop read some prayers, the customary vote of thanks was passed, the National Anthem was played and sung, and the Princess passed down the crowded ward, and back to the entrance hall, where the nursing staff and servants were assembled, into the Board-room, where she stayed for a short time drinking tea and chatting with different ladies before leaving, amidst cheers, to return to Osborne.

She left behind her a very pleasant memory of a gracious and kindly visit.

As soon as she had left, the whole Hospital was thrown open to visitors, who were not slow to avail themselves of the opportunity of thoroughly investigating all there was to be seen, and the patients' tea-time was over before the wards had settled down to their normal calm.

All the space at my disposal this week has been taken up by the account of our opening function. Next week I will tell you something of the structural improvements.

M. M.

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