

Reflections

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR



The Committee of the Mount Vernon Hospital for Consumption have selected Northwood as the site for their branch hospital, where their system of open-air treatment will have every advantage. The site secured is near Moor Park, the residence of Lord Ebury, and is almost at the top of Batchworth Heath, in one of the loveliest parts of Hertfordshire, yet within fifteen miles of Baker Street. The hospital is estimated to cost when complete for 100 beds nearly £70,000, and the money is to be found in the anonymous donation of £121,000 which the Governors received last year. The hospital will stand in sixty acres of ground, and the work has been commenced.

The London Fever Hospital, Islington, founded in 1802, "for the cure and prevention of Infectious Malignant Fevers," is this year celebrating its centenary. The Committee of the Hospital are issuing invitations to an "At Home" given at the Mansion House by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, to meet Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, and his Grace the Duke of Argyll, K.T., on April 28th.

Leicester has decided to mark the Coronation year by completing the fund of £50,000 needed for the extension of the General Infirmary, and to spend £3,000 in entertaining the young and old.

Welford and Sons, Limited, Chief Dairy and Offices, Elgin Avenue, Maida Vale, London, W., have been honoured with a Royal Warrant appointing them Dairymen to His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales.

Those who wish to combine a visit to a delightful part of Scotland, with benefit to their health, and regard to their personal comfort will do well to write for the prospectus of Dundanon, Moffat, Dumfriesshire, N.B., which is a charming country house, arranged for the reception of paying guests, under the management of Miss S. G. Stewart. It is only eight hours from London, and the house, which is most comfortably appointed, commands a splendid view of the surrounding hills and woods. Moffat is celebrated for its sulphur and chalybeate wells, and baths of various kinds are easily available.

In order to acquaint the children of Germany with the precautions to be taken to avoid tuberculosis and to prevent the spread of it, the central committee formed in Berlin to combat the disease have printed 150,000 copies of a popularly-written leaflet, which children can understand, for distribution among schools throughout the Empire.

News comes from New York that a Venezuela shrub called tua-tua is found to be of great benefit for leprosy, and great hopes are entertained that a cure has at last been found.

Women and Surgery in Olden Times

It is interesting at times to cast our eyes back on the position of women during the old centuries before the so-called *advance of the sex* began. There seems, in early ages, to have been little or no legal or technical difficulty to women who were able and inclined to study medicine or surgery. The teachings of the Arabic School of Medicine were brought into Europe by Jewish students and physicians. But the priests got laws made against them, and those who employed them. The chief European school was at Salerno, and it is well known that there were several women there, whose writings were held in high esteem so early as the eleventh century. A curious cause is given for the splitting up of the different branches of the healing art. The monks, in most countries, held all the practice in medicine and surgery. They used to call in the barbers to assist them when necessary. The council of Tours, in 1163, decided that it was not suitable for religious men, even in healing, to shed blood. Hence the fraternities abandoned the art of surgery, but kept up the science of medicine, which was also taught in the convents by nuns. The barbers, who had been wont to assist, were ready to perform at least the simpler operations of blood-letting, cauterization, tooth drawing, bone-setting, etc., and hence arose in this country the craft of "the Barber-Surgeons." There are notices preserved of this company as early as 1308, and when they put their ordinances to paper, they referred back to "time out of mind" for their foundation. The earliest recorded admission of a surgeon, not a barber, is that of Master John, of Southwark "Cirurgicus," 1312. From the "times out of mind" the custom prevailed in this company of admitting *women* to the freedom, either by *apprenticeship*, or by *patrimony*. These freewomen bound their apprentices, both boys and girls, at the Barber-Surgeons' Hall, just as the brothers did.

Mr. Sidney Young, who has provided a beautiful edition of the "Annals of the Barber Surgeons," gives us many illustrations of this custom. In one case the girl was apprenticed to a barber surgeon and his wife. "On December 18th, 1666, Katharina Bowghley, daughter of George Bowghley, of Addley, in the County of Stafford, gentleman, deceased, apprenticed herself to William Bennet, B.C., and Martha, his wife, for seven years from this day."

Knowing this, the customs of the company become more worthy of consideration by women.

By about the middle of the fourteenth century there seems to have arisen a very small guild of surgeons, who would not be connected with barbers, and in 1369 they had petitioned for an order that no one should practice surgery without training and examination. This seems to have prejudicially affected the barber surgeons, because, in 1376, they also appealed to the Mayor and Aldermen against unskilled practitioners in surgery, and prayed that no strangers or *upland men* should be admitted to the freedom of the city, but upon due examination of their skill, and that the instruments they used should be inspected. That two Masters should be appointed annually to see to this. This was granted, and in 1382 a man who had pretended to be a surgeon, and who attempted to work cures by charms, was exposed, and severely punished

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