

Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



The attacking press has been holding up the trustees of the Manchester Royal Infirmary as an example to "Bart's," in that they have decided to sell the central site upon which the Infirmary stands to the Corporation for £400,000. Anyway, if "Bart's" is to follow in the steps of Manchester it can discuss the question of removal for twenty years—a term of grace indeed! We think the Corporation of Manchester has made an uncommonly good bargain, as no doubt time will prove. It is likely that the new hospital will be built at Longsight, about two miles from the present site.

It is announced that the Metropolitan Asylums Board will shortly remove the small-pox hospital ships from the Thames, where they have lain off Purfleet since 1884.

Expert opinion has recently recognised that the disease is air-borne; and when a number of cases have been treated on board the ships an outbreak has invariably followed in Purfleet, Grays, and Orsett.

The Asylums Board have now opened their new small-pox hospitals, erected on the Kent side of the Thames, near Long Reach, and the ships are therefore no longer required.

The net result of the Central Poor Law Conference, held at the Guildhall last week, was the passing of the following resolution:—"This Conference is of opinion that a Departmental Committee should be appointed to consider the question of the casual poor, having special regard to the question of labour colonies and to the suppression of child vagrancy." It was resolved also that a deputation from the Conference and the Association of Poor Law Unions should wait upon the President of the Local Government Board on the subject.

To fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Mr. G. Q. Roberts, Mr. Ernest W. Morris has been appointed Secretary to the Governors of the London Hospital. Mr. Morris has filled the position of Senior Dispenser to the hospital, and has been in charge of the suite of new operating theatres since their erection. We are of opinion that the responsibility for the cleanliness and order of hospital theatres is best entrusted to a trained Sister.

There can be no doubt that the demand upon the premises of the Brighton and Hove Lying-in Institution and Hospital for Women and Children has outgrown the work which is possible at the premises in West Street. It is unreasonable to suppose that premises in use in 1831 are adequate in 1903; yet, by the exercise of the greatest economy in space, the hospital has been made, so to speak, to meet the demand upon it, and the institution has been able to carry on its excellent work. But a site is wanted upon which a larger building can be erected, and this cannot be done without money. At the annual meeting the welcome announcement was made that a gentleman, whose name is not to be disclosed, had promised

£1,000, provided another £4,000 can be secured, to act as a nucleus for a building fund.

The Lord Mayor of Bristol, Sir Robert Symes, presiding at the annual meeting of the Bristol General Hospital, paid a tribute to the excellent work conducted by the institution. He had been over the wards, and he had been very much impressed with the arrangements made for the comfort of the inmates. He would like his fellow citizens to know, if he might be permitted to say so, that in his opinion the Bristol General Hospital could challenge comparison with any institution, not only in Bristol and the West of England, but throughout the United Kingdom. There could be no doubt that it was more than a credit to the city, and the citizens should not only be proud of it, but should do their utmost to support the Committee in their labours.

With respect to the new asylum for London which it is proposed to erect on the Horton estate, and the cost of which is estimated approximately at £569,500, the London County Council will be asked by the Asylums Committee to authorise a preliminary expenditure of £97,210. The Council's existing asylums' debt amounts to rather more than a million and a half sterling, and the annual charge for interest on and repayment of this debt, including the old county loans, is about £117,000.

The report of Dr. Clouston, Physician-Superintendent of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum for the Insane, presented to the statutory annual meeting of the Corporation, is of much interest. Dealing with the cause of insanity, Dr. Clouston said that intemperance in drink was responsible during the last year for the admission of 119 persons out of a total of 423, amounting to 28 per cent. This was the highest number ever received in one year as the result of alcoholic excess. This preventable cause was a veritable plague spot in the social life. General paralysis was responsible for 13 per cent. of the cases. Eighty of the patients suffered from advanced senility and gross brain disease. One-third of the admissions were from the beginning incurable in character. An alarming event of the year was the outbreak of an epidemic of asylum dysentery or colitis, in connection with which seven deaths occurred. Dr. Clouston is of opinion that one possible and likely means of the propagation of the disease was the ward cats, two of which were found to be suffering from it. This is a new and important fact in the history of an epidemic.

The report also embodied the opinion, even more strongly expressed than last year, that it would be a humane and practicable proceeding for the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, to establish mental wards for the treatment of incipient and transient cases of mental disorder. Dr. Clouston pointed out that the idea of such incipient cases being treated in general hospitals is rapidly taking root in America, where it is carried out practically in several hospitals. Certainly it seems logical to provide for the treatment of mental disease in the early and curable stages, instead of waiting until it is so advanced that confinement in an asylum becomes necessary and ultimate recovery very doubtful.

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