

## Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



"Hospital Saturday" was observed in London and in the suburbs on Saturday for the thirty-first successive year. Special collections were made—in place of the street contributions—in business houses, &c., in aid of the hospitals and dispensaries. The returns from the various District Committees which organised the collection among tradespeople and others will not be issued for at least a fortnight. The total receipts of these Committees last year reached £2,226—an increase of £193 on the receipts for 1902.

The members of the Metropolitan Asylums Board at their meeting on Saturday discussed a report from the Hospitals Committee, in which they stated that they had received a letter from the Local Government Board reporting that thirteen Boards of Guardians in London had protested against the proposal of the managers as regards the use of the Joyce Green Hospital for experiments on animals in connection with the causation of small-pox, and asked to be furnished with the managers' observations on the subject and with full particulars of their proposals. The Hospitals Committee replied that it was not in a position to give the information, but pointed out that it was most desirable from the point of view of reducing the great expenses entailed in the treatment of small-pox in London that some effort should be made to find out the cause of the disease, and that the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board afforded the only opportunity in London for such an inquiry to be made. An amendment expressing disapproval of the Committee's report was lost, and the report was agreed to.

Mr. J. Halsey Morton has been appointed Assistant Secretary to the Mount Vernon Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest, Hampstead and Northwood, Middlesex.

On Monday the Bethlem Royal Hospital in South London—known far and wide as "Bedlam," the oldest charitable institution in the world for the insane—was reopened for the admission of patients, after having been closed for a period, during which important alterations have been made in the premises. The institution of a complete system of protection against fire is a change of which the fatal outbreak at the London County Asylum at Colney Hatch emphasised the need; and the improvements that have been carried out comprise also the replacement of the old system of drainage, the redecoration of the wards, and a variety of structural alterations.

The charity, whose funds have been severely taxed by the cost of executing these works, dates back to 1247, when the institution took the form of a priory at Bishopsgate for the Order of St. Mary of Bethlehem. Later the hospital was at Moorfields, and in the end it was transferred to its present position, where it stands upon what was formerly the site of the notorious Dog and Duck tavern. It possesses accommodation for about 300 inmates, and an indication of the scope of its beneficent activities may be found in the fact that

during a period of seventy-five years some 17,000 afflicted persons received care and treatment within its walls, and that more than half of this number were dismissed as cured.

A project is now under the consideration of the Parks Committee of the London County Council for the acquisition of the site of the asylum and its conversion into a public park and recreation ground. The scheme is likely to take the form of a proposal to exchange for this land a site in a less central position already in the possession of the county authority.

The East London Medical Society has issued a statement explanatory of its position in view of the comments which have been made since the last quarterly meeting of the Governors of the London Hospital. The Society objects to the part-payment system under which patients are expected to pay a proportion of the cost of medicines and dressings, on the ground that it induces many patients who are too well off to deserve hospital relief to go to the hospital for treatment in the belief that they are not receiving charity. Large numbers of patients now treated at the hospital are well able to pay the fees of a private practitioner. The Society greatly regrets that no rule has been made that all patients whose means are sufficient to enable them to pay the fees of a private practitioner shall be refused any attendance beyond first-aid. In this way a considerable economy of the hospital funds might be effected. Complaint is made that the medical profession is subjected to a most unfair competition with subsidised institutions.

It was stated on Saturday that the Local Government Board are about to adopt drastic measures at Dewsbury involving radical reform of management, in consequence of the continuance of small-pox in all its vigour. In the past quarter upwards of £1,000 was spent by the Board of Guardians in vaccination fees. On the adoption of the report on the subject on Friday, a guardian stated that the larger the bills the larger was the number of small-pox cases reported. People had gone at the rate of 100 a day to the public vaccinator, but he was convinced that vaccination was simply spreading the disease. It is probable that vaccination will be taken out of the hands of the Guardians.

By a large majority, the Board of Management of the Cardiff Infirmary last week determined, on the initiation of Colonel Bruce Vaughan, to open forthwith ten more cots in the children's ward. Colonel Bruce Vaughan, in support of his proposition, stated that during the last ten years, despite an increase of 60,000 in the population of the borough and an equally marvellous increase in the trade of the port, no extra provision had been made for the treatment of children in their institution. They had the accommodation. There would be but a trifling expense for the equipment, and the maintenance of ten more beds would cost the comparatively small sum of £600 a year, which, seeing that they had 133 children now awaiting admission, and that delay in treatment would mean death in many cases, he had every faith that assistance would be forthcoming from the public.

Lady Victoria Manners will, on November 5th, open the new ward at the Nottingham and Notting

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)