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THE STORY OF "MOORFIELDS," THE OLDEST AND LARGEST EYE HOSPITAL IN BRITAIN.

It was not until a near relative spent six weeks as a patient in "Moorfields," that we became personally acquainted with the unrivalled skill and kindness of its surgeons and nurses; and in our desire to make the great work of "Moorfields" more widely known, we are able by the courtesy of the Appeal Secretary to publish something of the history of this house of healing, which we feel sure cannot fail to arouse the admiration of our readers.

The story of any institution which has its roots in a by-gone age falls easily into two divisions; the written story of the dead past and the living continuation as seen by the present generation. At "Moorfields" we have learned to look back to the past history of the hospital with a feeling of great respect for those who, in the world of ophthalmology, charted the unknown ways which, with the passing of the years, have been smoothed into the broad highways of present day knowledge.

From the very earliest days, the hospital has been a post-graduate school and very soon after its foundation similar institutions inspired by its influence were opened in other parts of the World. In 1811, two young graduates of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, Dr. Edward Delafield and Dr. J. Kearney Rodgers, studied at the hospital under Dr. Farre and Mr. Benjamin Travers and when they returned to their own country in 1818 made plans to establish a similar institution in America. Two years later the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary began its great and beneficent work. In 1816 Dr. Edward Reynolds travelled from Boston to England to attend the practice of the hospital and the lectures given by Mr. Travers and Sir William Lawrence. When Dr. Reynolds returned home he found his father blind from cataract in both eyes; fortified by his recent experience in London he operated with complete success. The operation for cataract had not been performed in Boston before. Not only did the result establish Dr. Reynolds' reputation, but it led to the foundation in 1824 of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary. The facts with regard



THE ROYAL LONDON OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL (MOORFIELDS).

Our story opens in a City of London coffee house in the reign of George III. A meeting had been called to consider the proposals made by a young surgeon, John Cunningham Saunders, for the founding of an institution to deal specifically with the diseases of the eye and ear. At that time many soldiers who had returned to England from the Egyptian campaign against Napoleon were suffering from an eye disease then known as "Egyptian Ophthalmia," but which we now know to have been a mixed infection of purulent ophthalmia and trachoma. The spread of the disease was not confined to the army, but extended widely throughout the country when the disbanded troops returned to their homes carrying infection with them.

As an outcome of that meeting of City merchants, "The London Dispensary for Curing Diseases of the Eye and Ear" was opened on March 25th, 1805, in Charterhouse Square. John Cunningham Saunders was appointed its first surgeon and Dr. Farre its consulting physician. Two years later, the charity changed its name to that of "The London Infirmary for Curing Diseases of the Eye." When Saunders died in 1810 at the early age of 37 he was succeeded by Benjamin Travers and William Lawrence, both men of the highest scientific attainments who became Fellows of the Royal Society. to Canada are somewhat similar, although the dates are much later.

At the time when Reynolds and his colleagues from New York were working at the hospital there was also attending a Mr. R. Richardson who entered the medical service of the East India Company. When in 1819 the Directors of that Company resolved to establish an eye hospital in Madras, he was appointed its first superintendent.

The Madras Eye Infirmary, now known as the Madras Government Ophthalmic Hospital, is one of the most important institutions of its kind in the World. Its foundation was followed in 1824 by the establishment of eye hospitals in Calcutta and Bombay, each under the direction of surgeons who had studied at "Moorfields."

Scientific progress in ophthalmology went on steadily until the middle of the century when a discovery was made which gave it considerable impetus. Charles Babbage in this country in 1847 and V. Helmholtz of Konisberg in 1851 discovered the possibility of looking into the back of the eye and invented the instrument known as the ophthalmoscope. In 1851 there was a great exhibition which brought to London from Holland a young ophthalmologist named Donders and from Berlin, V. Graefe, fresh from studying at all the eye clinics on the Continent.



