

philanthropic institution. Telephone wires run into the building from all points. The five young "Sawbones" I met were full of *esprit*, and they assured me a "call" was answered with the alacrity of the Fire Brigade.

\* \* \*

This then is the story of the Vienna "First Aid" Society to the wounded and dying, a life's monument to the philanthropic organizing skill of Baron Freiherr von Mundy. Must London wait long for another Mundy to establish such an institution in her midst? Meanwhile the Viennese can point with pleasure to the buildings in the Stuben Ring, and re-echo the remarks Professor Billroth once made regarding their founder, "Austria cannot thank Fortune enough for the possession of such a man.

\* \* \*

At a Meeting of the Chelsea Vestry on Wednesday, attention was called to a long report signed by HENRY E. WRIGHT, treasurer of the Chelsea Hospital for Women, that had been sent to members in reference to the report to the Board of the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. LOUIS C. PARKES, on the institution. The report states:—

"The Board of Management are convinced that not a single member of the Vestry would willingly seek to discredit a valuable charitable institution which has done good work in their parish for some 21 years with credit to its staff and incalculable benefit to the poor, and that apart from the views expressed by some of the members, as reported in the papers, must only have been uttered under a deep sense of public duty, quite natural, it is true, because of the sensational and inaccurate report made by Dr. Parkes, and that the Board will gladly listen to a plain statement of fact. Dr. Parkes' report, although professedly a statement as to the insanitary condition of the Hospital, is made use of to attack the entire medical staff for the operations they have performed. Had the reflections he has made on the professional probity and skill of the staff as a body been directed against any single member, Dr. Parkes would have been proceeded against for libel and defamation of professional character, from which even his official position could not protect him. Apart from the presumption of a sanitary officer setting up his opinion against that of a body of consulting and specialist medical men of long years of experience in the operative treatment of diseases of women, there is the fact that the figures he has given you in reference to these operations and deaths resulting therefrom are very inaccurate, and therefore valueless. . . . The Board begs further to submit that the sanitary officer is by right of such office not entitled to express an opinion on the medical management of any Hospital. But the Board gladly takes advantage of his having done so, and have had the minutest details of all the operations and deaths for the year tabulated in precisely the form Dr. Parkes demands, and have explicitly answered each and all of his questions in the exact form in which he puts them. These tables disprove the worse than insinuations made by Dr. Parkes against the professional probity and skill of the staff of this Hospital, and it is the Board's intention to submit them to the most exacting and critical tribunal of the medical profession by publishing the entire details in the medical journals. . . . The sanitary part of Dr. Parkes's report involves that gentleman in the serious charge of misrepresentation and neglect, which the Board feels obliged to present to your Vestry. They make no complaint, because your officer by his fiat has obliged them to spend £800 on sanitation and improvements, compelling them to relay the drains under the Hospital that were outside it, which sanitary authorities generally make a *sine qua non*. . . . Dr. Parkes by the wording of his report led the Vestry to suppose that he was the person who made his way into the Hospital and discovered its insanitary condition, whereas he and the sanitary inspector were invited by

the Board to test the drains and inspect the Hospital from a sanitary point of view. Dr. Parkes stated that four Nurses were taken with scarlet fever. He added one without authority, three was the number, and it may here be affirmed that no patient ever took the infection, clearly pointing to the probability that the scarlet fever was brought to the Hospital by one of the Nurses, and the drains were not responsible for it. It was, in fact, stamped out in three days. At the date on which Dr. Parkes made his sensational report to you the Hospital had actually been closed to patients for five weeks. If the report was so urgent, why did he not make it to the Vestry until three weeks after his personal inspection of the Hospital. Dr. Parkes was called upon on three different days by the Board's sanitary engineer, and declined to see him, although the object was to submit the plans showing the sanitary improvements he imposed. Dr. Parkes, on February 14, served the Board with a compulsory order to carry out the works which he knew the men had been hard at work upon nearly 10 days before and nearly a month after he made his first inspection. That the Board acted with great promptitude when scarlet fever was discovered, and afterwards throughout will be seen by a glance at the dates of the various incidents which are given in the order they occurred. These dates also emphasise the view they take of your medical officer's inconsistent actions and ill-considered report, which, placed in the hands of the evening and local Press, has led to highly coloured comments being made and even large-typed "Grave Scandal" contents bills, which might have jeopardised the existence of the Institution had its position been at all weak. The Board respectfully begs the Vestry to take this statement into their earnest consideration, not necessarily with a view to continue a controversy, but that you may judge how far the aspersions are justified which have been cast upon a body of laymen and medical men, whose only interest is to maintain the Hospital with the utmost efficiency in the interest of poor and suffering women."

The Vestry decided to refer this statement to Dr. PARKES, so that he might present a report to the Board concerning it.

\* \* \*

A Special Meeting of Governors of the Chelsea Hospital for Women will be held at the Hospital on Monday next the 19th inst., at 3 p.m., to consider the question, and we are glad to observe that Lord CADOGAN, K.G., the President, will take the Chair.

\* \* \*

THE Hospital Chaplains' Union was founded in 1889 for the bringing together for mutual help and counsel of chaplains of the London General Hospitals, who would be otherwise isolated in their work. The Union has just held its fourth anniversary. The report presented showed that it has been successful in attaining the objects aimed at. Meetings are held quarterly, at each of which a paper is read on some subject connected directly or indirectly with Hospital work. A proposal to extend the limits of the Union so as to include the chaplains of other than London General Hospitals was discussed, and found to be impracticable at present. The Bishop of ROCHESTER presided at one meeting, and expressed his warm sympathy with all "institutional clergy" in their comparatively solitary work.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)