



### Our Foreign Letter.

#### KOMMUNE HOSPITAL IN COPENHAGEN.

ALMINDELIGT Hospital (the hospital of the poor) had been condemned long before 1853, as thoroughly inadequate for its purpose.

On his continental tour in 1853 the "Great Sanitary Inspector Cholera" came to Copenhagen, there to demonstrate with the cruel kindness that has invariably had such excellent results in the way of hastening sanitary reforms. The terrors of those deadly object lessons have never been forgotten. The scenes enacted in the over-crowded, ill-ordered wards of the Almindeligt during those days may be imagined. They were not peculiar to Copenhagen. Into our English wards death entered in his ghastliest form, entered as the hideous avenger of culpable neglect and stupidity, rudely crushing as he came the child and its mother, the strong man and the young girl.

In a way these victims were martyrs, their agony was the only demonstration by which the grim lecturer could make the survivors grasp the existing unfitness of things. And they did not die in vain.

The cholera passed. All Europe heaved a sigh, and forthwith set to work to apply the lesson it had learned. Aqueducts, drains, foundations were overhauled. The mean and poisonous were condemned in self-defence, and noble hospitals arose as ramparts against the deadliest foe a country has—disease. Not the least noble of the hospitals that rose at this time is the General Hospital (Kommune Hospital) of Copenhagen.

The site of the hospital is the Sortedamsagre at the Ostre Farimagssvejen. At first this site was surrounded by gardens and open squares, but as time passed houses began to grow up round the hospital instead of flowers. None of these houses however are allowed to approach the hospital at a distance less than 110 Alen (Danish measure).

North-west of the Kommune lies the Sortedamssø, one of the beautiful lakes of Copenhagen, to which that lovely city owes its main charm. On the south-east are the Botanical Gardens. Considering the growth of the city in forty-two years, the Kommune hospital is still curiously *central*, distributing its benefits to all points of the compass with a civic impartiality of which it is proud.

The "royal architect," Hans Christian Hansen, a man of great talent and considerable fame, designed the Kommune Hospital. The success of his plans has added to his celebrity.

The administration was placed in the hands of Staatsrat Ehlers. The Master-Builder was Mr. S. P. Beckmann.

The names of these gentlemen deserve to be remembered, for so thoroughly did they study the

solidity of the work on hand, that after the hospital had been in use for twenty-five years, *no repairs*, other than of a purely superficial nature, had been found necessary. (And this in a climate that is about as boisterous and changeful as that of Edinburgh.)

On the 2nd and 5th September, 1863, King Frederick III. and Queen Caroline Amelia—a woman whom history marks as one of the most extraordinary characters of her day—surveyed the Hospital carefully and thoroughly.

It was then declared open to the public. The first patients were brought over from the Almindeligt, and fresh cases taken in from the city.

One of the rules of the new Hospital decreed that "*no case be exempt from treatment.*"

The wisdom of this regulation was soon put to a severe test. In the years 1864 and 1865 small-pox broke out in Copenhagen. At the same time came war with resultant surgical cases, a simultaneous epidemic of ophthalmia, besides the usual run of diseases—all to be nursed in one building.

The result needs no comment.

Yet it was not before 1878 that a quarantine Hospital was opened for cases of small-pox or Asiatic cholera. This was the Oresunds Hospital.

In 1879 the Blegdams Hospital followed with 240 beds. It receives fever cases of various descriptions.

The same year saw the opening of Dronning Louisa Børne Hospital (Queen Louisa's Hospital for Children). This Hospital has already been described in the NURSING RECORD for May 5th, 1894. It is, in a way, a Branch Hospital of the Kommune, which passes on its child-patients, as far as possible, to the Dronning. In the case of pauper children the Kommune pays one kroner eighty öre (about two shillings) a day to the Dronning for the support of the patients it has forwarded.

In 1886 the Vestre Hospital still further relieved the Kommune, which now has elbow-room for action, and every facility for giving its patients the best of scientific aid and humane treatment. The possibility of patients being infected on the premises is virtually reduced to nil.

To such Nurses (I am told they still exist) who have not yet grasped the fact that "*dust is deadly and ill-made beds murderous,*" the spotless wards of the Kommune would prove an example, while the management of detail and general government have at present reached a pitch of perfection that is positively soothing to contemplate. The rhythms of trifles, the harmony of the whole, the true balance of numbers (where numbers and precision tell) would charm the most mathematical critic.

Nearly 1,000 patients can be accommodated in the present Kommune Hospital, allowing each bed 87 sq. ft. of standing room and 1218 sq. ft. of space.

On this plan the main building contains ten large wards with sixty beds each. There are in the same building seven wards with fifteen beds, six with four four with six, three with seventeen, &c. There is a quarantine ward for isolation cases, a separate block for skin diseases, and another containing a well-organised lunatic asylum.

(To be continued.)

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