

Reflections

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE PRINCESS OF WALES has sent a donation of £20 in aid of the Extension and Improvement Fund of Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital, Marylebone Road, of which she is a Vice-Patron.

Returns just published show that the workshop collection of the Hospital Saturday Fund from January 7th to September 26th this year, was £7,509 4s. 5d., as against £6,948 6s. 5d. last year; the street collection £4,549 1s. 6½d., against £4,379 9s. 4d.; and miscellaneous receipts were £129 15s. 8½d., against £100 1s. 9d. The total income this year is thus far £12,188 1s. 8d., against £11,427 17s. 6d. for the corresponding period of 1895. The shrinkage in the street collection, which had been noticed for several years past, was this year arrested, there being from this source an increase of £137 16s. 2d. as compared with last year. The workshop collection yielded, at the end of last month, £560 more than was obtained in the like time in 1895. The Ambulance branch of the Society's work is progressing and extending satisfactorily.

The Australasian youth is progressive. We read recently that "A boy, aged nine years, who was bitten on the finger by a snake in Victoria, promptly tied a string round his finger, and then chopped off the bitten part with a tomahawk. He is now recovering." First Aid to the Injured is evidently taught on very heroic lines in this up-to-date colony.

A Committee of the friends, old fellow-students, and former pupils of Sir W. MacCormac, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, has been formed, under the chairmanship of the Marquis of Dufferin, to have Sir William's portrait painted for presentation to Queen's College, Belfast, where he was educated.

Mr. Bancroft is to give a reading—as arranged for the purpose by himself from the text—of Charles Dickens's "Christmas Carol," at the large Queen's Hall, in Langham Place, on the evening of Monday, November 23rd, in aid of the cancer wards of the Middlesex Hospital. Should the reading prove a success it is Mr. Bancroft's intention to devote a certain portion of the winter months of this and of succeeding years to the purpose of readings for charitable purposes, and he hopes, with this philanthropic end, to visit all the leading towns and cities of the United Kingdom. He purposes to have only the rent of the halls and the cost of printing deducted from the receipts, so that the various charities will receive the benefit of the whole of the proceeds.

Dr. Fairclough, of the Mirfield Memorial Hospital, has been giving some interesting views on the Cottage Hospital plan. He thinks it almost better not to treat out-patients at a Hospital of that kind. He says:

"What we want at the Hospital are serious cases which cannot be treated at home, and our object is to get them well as soon as possible and send them back." Such a place, he said, had long been wanted, and was a great benefit to the district. The Cottage Hospital he looked upon as a grand institution, and expressed it as his opinion that any town with a population of ten thousand should be able to maintain a small Hospital of its own, which need not be an expensive building nor worked at any great cost.

He pointed out that at the Mirfield Hospital they had tried the experiment for the first year of charging patients 1s. a day wherever it could be paid, but it was found that many of the people preferred to go to the Infirmaries at Huddersfield, Dewsbury, or Leeds; and although the charge of 1s. per day was yet in force, it was seldom applied for. Private patients were admitted to Hospital at a guinea a week, and were attended by their own medical man. Each member of the staff takes weekly turns at the Hospital, and the system, Dr. Fairclough says, works satisfactorily. Any of the five surgeons sending in a patient keeps charge of the case, and attends the patient whether it be his week's turn at the Hospital or not, but when a patient is sent in by an employer he is attended by the surgeon of the week.

In the introductory address given at Westminster Hospital by Dr. Wills, he very charmingly dealt with the "doctor in fiction." He said Goldsmith, who died from taking a quack remedy, has an amusing dissertation on quack doctors and their nostrums in his "Letters from a Citizen of the World," which is applicable to the present day with its much-advertised cures, its Holloways and Beechams. In the present century Miss Mitford, in her charming pictures of village life, has celebrated two apothecaries of the older school, both now antiquated, but honest according to their lights; and Thackeray has immortalised this now departed race in his picture of the father of Arthur Pendennis, who starts as an apprentice in London, next sets up a humble shop at Bath, but, through the patronage of the great, ended by visiting his patients in style in his own carriage. Charlotte Brontë, in Dr. John Graham Bretton, the secondary hero of "Villette," has exhibited the doctor as an accomplished man of the world, and dwells on his personal influence on his patients. In Mrs. Gaskell's "Wives and Daughters," and in Miss Martineau's "Deerbrook" are two excellent types of first-rate country doctors. But of all the doctors in the literature of this century, George Eliot's Lydgate in "Middlemarch" is the central figure.

A curious application came last week before the Southwark magistrate, when a respectable woman applied for advice as to a gentleman lodger who had gone away without paying his rent, but leaving a "valuable young female skeleton." She kept reiterating the beauty and youth of the skeleton, as if it were a most perfect specimen of female loveliness, most valuable to skeleton connoisseurs. The magistrates advised her if the rent remained unpaid to sell the skeleton and pay herself. But from her apparent estimate of it, she will find it difficult to part from such "a thing of beauty."

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