

Reflections

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



A FINE pile of buildings erected as an additional infirmary for the sick by a combination of London unions has been added to the already numerous Poor Law institutions in the metropolis. The boards of guardians mutually interested in the undertaking are the Strand and Westminster unions and the parishes of St. George, Bloomsbury, and St. Giles in the Fields. Being compelled to take action in the matter of adequate provision for their invalids by representations from the Local Government Board, the Central London Sick Asylum District acquired a site in the open country and a pleasant neighbourhood near Hendon. Here buildings have been erected which, besides providing accommodation for 274 beds, leave room for extra pavilions in which 126 more patients can be medically treated. This, at a total cost of £130,000, supplements the already existing accommodation at the infirmary in Cleveland Street. At the inaugural ceremony Mr. Prescott, chairman of the building committee, having unveiled a tablet commemorating the occasion, presided at a luncheon numerously attended by members of the various unions interested and their friends.

The method adopted by the London School Board for testing the eyesight of the children attending the schools does not find favour with the Hospitals Central Council, who have lodged a protest against it. It is urged that to swamp the out-patient department in the ophthalmic hospitals is wrong. Every child's sight should be tested systematically instead of spasmodically, and proper arrangements made for a special staff of skilled surgeons to conduct the work.

The friends and subscribers of the Royal Infirmary, Bristol, received a highly satisfactory report last week at the annual meeting—at least from a nurse's point of view—for although there was a substantial deficit, the governors have something to show for the expenditure. The new wing of the Nurses' Home, to which a good garden is now to be added, has been completed, and the whole building now accommodates 93 sisters and nurses, who are able to sleep and pass their hours of recreation away from the wards. The greatly increased amount of washing now found necessary for perfect sanitation rendered the steam laundry, though only erected five years ago, altogether inadequate. A considerable enlargement was therefore carried out by forming an additional storey and putting in additional machinery. The Operation Theatre, named after the late Mr. Greig Smith, has been completed by the enamelling of the walls. The theatre will bear comparison with any in Europe or America. The total cost approaches £3,000, of which £300 was contributed by the Greig Smith Memorial Fund. The accounts under the head "Extraordinary Expenditure" show a total of upwards of £6,000 expended on these and other less important permanent improvements during the year.

At the 120th Annual Meeting of the Subscribers to

the General Hospital, Birmingham, the report presented by the Committee showed that much excellent work has been accomplished by this institution, but, unfortunately there is a deficiency of £6,491 10s. 2d. on the year's working, which, with the adverse balance of £192 11s. 11d. on the Jaffray Branch, and a deficit for 1898 of £1,186 13s. 5d., makes a total adverse balance of £7,780 15s. 6d. We cannot believe that the citizens of Birmingham, whose liberality is well known, will permit the debt of their chief hospital to increase, or indeed to exist. No worthier object for the liberality of the citizens of whatever religious opinions could be found. It is worthy of note that the hospital has a larger average of in-patients to each bed occupied than any other general hospital in the United Kingdom. We notice also that the systematic inquiry into the social circumstances of patients has resulted in a number of cases, after receiving "first aid," being referred to their own private medical attendants. The report also states that "the large and increasing number of applications for admission of enteric fever cases calls for the anxious consideration of the board owing to the severe demands made by these cases on the accommodation for medical patients in the hospital and on the nursing staff. On the advice of the Medical Committee it was resolved that "not more than one-third of the beds in the medical wards should be occupied by typhoid cases." This seems a very large proportion, and the fact that such a large number of enteric cases apply for admission seems to point to the need of sanitary improvements in the city. Certainly in the interests of health it is inadvisable to admit a large number of patients suffering from this disease into the general wards of a hospital in the heart of the city. Surely it is much more suitable that they should be received into special wards in a hospital for infectious diseases which presumably is maintained by the city corporation. What, at present, becomes of the cases which the General Hospital is unable to admit?

Mr. J. L. Birkin is indeed the fairy god-father of the sick children of Nottingham. He recently presented Forest House and grounds to the Committee, and has made another very generous gift, in order to expedite the work of converting Forest House to the purposes for which it is intended. In a letter to the Chairman, Mr. Birkin offers to give at once, or as soon as required, £3,000, on the condition that when the present hospital is disposed of, a like sum, i.e., £3,000, shall be invested, and form a nucleus of an endowment fund, to be added to from time to time, as money is collected, having regard to the general interests of the institution.

A useful little book, on the Preservation of Health and the Hygiene of the Home, by J. Edward Squire, M.D. and D.P.H., is published by the Sanitary Publishing Company, 5, Fetter Lane, E.C., at the small price of 3d. It aims at dealing with the principles of Home and Personal Hygiene in a form which is within the means and the understanding of all classes. It certainly succeeds in giving a large amount of very useful information in a small compass. The book will, we think, be welcomed by many district nurses to whom it will be useful both as containing information desirable to themselves and for distribution among their patients.

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