

The cost of these improvements, including the new boilers and the new sanitary annexe to the wards of the south wing of the hospital, amounted to £12,000.

The Paddington Children's Hospital has received from its chairman and treasurer, Mr. George Hanbury, a donation of £100 for current expenses and £200 towards the purchase money (£1,200) required for the new convalescent home, Fair View, Slough.

The Nurses of the Plaistow Home in Howard's Road are now in possession of the much-needed addition to their building, the generous gift of the late Sir Henry Tate. The new building was thrown open for inspection last week, when the Mayor and Corporation held a reception for that purpose in the Home. Among the guests present were Lady Tate (who is on the Committee). The building operations were commenced in November last, and enabled a long-desired object of the Committee to be realized—viz., the affiliation with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, which was one of the conditions imposed by Sir Henry Tate. In more than one of the speeches allusion was made to the recent typhoid epidemic in West Ham and Canning Town, the nursing of which was entirely undertaken by Sister Katherine (Miss Twining) and her staff. Eighteen of the Home Nurses were then set aside for the typhoid cases, and further contingents were imported from Guy's Hospital, St. Thomas's, St. John's House, and other institutions. The gathering thoroughly appreciated the announcement that the Borough Council had accorded the Institution a cordial vote of thanks for their services during the epidemic, of which, unfortunately, some trace still remains.

A feature of the reception was a successful musical entertainment. It may be added that notice was given of the Annual Christmas Bazaar, upon which the Maternity Charity and District Nurses' Home depends in a great degree for funds, as there is no endowment. The dates fixed are November 25th and 26th.

The plague scares at Glasgow and Liverpool have kept the medical officers of health on the *qui vive*; both outbreaks appear to be well in hand, and the authorities believe that they have been effectually checked. At Glasgow the central district of the city is infested with vermin, and a memorandum has been issued to proprietors and factors urging immediate steps to be taken, not merely to banish rats, but to exterminate them.

The laying of the memorial stone of the children's wing of Kettering General Hospital took place on Saturday afternoon, Lady Lilford performing the ceremony, while Lady Mary Trefusis, on behalf of her brother, the Duke of Buccleuch, presented a deed of gift of the additional land adjoining the hospital, which the Duke has given to the Governors.

Professor Lombroso, in a letter published lately in Rome, condemns electrocution as an unfortunate method of despatching criminals condemned to death. He suggests as an alternative to electrocution in the United States that the criminal should meet a painless death by means of chloroform or ether in the lethal chamber.

## Medicine in Ancient Times.

AN ADDRESS BY DR. W. HILL.

Dr. William Hill, in delivering the opening lecture to the students at St. Mary's Hospital, made some interesting references to the methods and customs adopted in Ancient Medicine and Surgery. Occultism, in its various forms of Faith-healing and quackery, was the chief note of his discourse, and he shows it to have taken a prominent part in the practice of medicine from the time of Hippocrates—*i.e.*, about 400 B.C.—and even before, to the present day.

"The evolution of medical art," he says, "is probably contemporaneous with the development of the higher anthropomorphic attributes in man," and he goes on to show that in its earlier stages it dealt with preventive rather than curative measures. This points to the wholesome instinct of our primitive forefathers, which is shared by the lower animals of to-day, and "which leads them to abstain or safeguard themselves against what might prove hurtful to their health, and leads them to seek out and adopt what is likely to prove beneficial." And thus we travel in a circle from the toxin-laden darkness of the later centuries, through the winding paths of comparatively recent anti-toxin methods, back to the primeval light of Asepsis. To use Dr. Hill's own words, "Preventive medicine in man, we may safely assume, preceded the evolution of the healing art, and was co-eval with the higher development of the reasoning faculty."

He deals at some length with the combination of the medical profession with the priesthood in early times, not only in Christian countries, but as found in the Lamas of Central Asia, the Vaidhyas of India, and the Druids of ancient Britain. "The medical missionaries of to-day are the modern analogues of the priest-physicians of old; they have the advantage, however, of carrying to distant climes the most perfect system of ethics, and the highest development of the science and art of medicine which the 20th century can produce." . . . They are, in short, emancipated from the "mythological characters of the ancient religions" which led the ancient medicine men into such labyrinths of occultism and superstition. History may serve to correct the modern impression that gratuitous medical service cannot be worth much, for the Alexandrian doctors—though we cannot gauge the worth of their services for the reason that their methods were kept secret—received only a share of the State revenues, never any fees from their patients.

It would be an interesting study to trace out more fully the lecturer's references to the mention of physicians and their work in the Bible. After quoting the "late Professor Sharpey who used to delight in calling the attention of his students to the admirable system of public medicine enforced by that great and wise man in Israel whom he was fond of alluding to, as his "excellent co-worker in the field of science Moses," he says:—

"Moses was at once his own Minister of State for Public Medicine and Chief Medical Officer of Health, and doubtless he was assisted by an efficient staff of subordinates. We also find Moses figuring on emergency as a physician." . . . "Moses refers to the preparation of the sacred oil 'after the apothecary's art,' and Job . . . spoke of his councillors as 'physicians of no value.' . . . We are told of King Asa that

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