

### The Hospital World.

#### THE ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL, BELFAST.

General interest has of late been centred in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, which was last week opened by the King and Queen. The hospital takes the place of the Belfast Royal Hospital, which is the oldest institution of the kind in Ulster, having been founded as the General Hospital in 1792. In 1817 the hospital was removed to Frederick Street, and in 1875 obtained a Royal Charter of Incorporation, and thenceforth became known as the Belfast Royal Hospital. The city of Belfast has, as is well known, rapidly increased; but no addition had been made to its chief hospital since 1867. A new hospital was urgently needed if the wants of the city were to be adequately met, and in 1896 the Very Rev. the Dean of Connor moved a resolution to the effect that the then Lord Mayor, Mr. W. J. Pirrie, J.P., be asked to call a public meeting for the purpose of inaugurating a movement for the building and equipment of a new hospital as a Jubilee acknowledgment of the benefits enjoyed during Queen Victoria's long and successful reign. How both the then Lord Mayor and Mrs. Pirrie responded to the invitation is well known, and at a public meeting convened to consider the question Mr. Pirrie opened the subscription list for a new hospital by announcing a donation from the firm with which he was connected for £5,000, and another of £2,000 from Mrs. Pirrie. Mrs. Pirrie was also largely instrumental in collecting the £100,000 required for the building fund, as well as another £50,000 for an endowment fund.

The Construction Committee selected Mr. William Henman, F.R.L.B.A., the architect of the new General Hospital, Birmingham, to prepare a design for the building. Taking into consideration the disadvantages of a hospital of several storeys built on the pavilion system, these being the distances apart of the wards, the necessity for staircases and lifts, the excessive labour to the staff, and the difficulties of supervision and administration, Mr. Henman suggested that it might be better to spread out the wards on one storey only, placed side by side, without intervening open spaces, lighted from the ends and by clerestory side windows.

This plan was adopted, and the whole accommodation for patients in the new hospital is on the ground level. The nineteen wards, with their accessory rooms, are placed side by side, and lighted as suggested. By means of the Plenum system of ventilation the whole atmosphere of the buildings is changed ten times an hour in summer, and seven times in winter, without the necessity for opening any windows. The air is cleansed and tempered so that both by night and day the whole hospital is maintained in a fresh and wholesome condition without draughts or open fireplaces,

Her late Majesty Queen Victoria was pleased to grant a supplemental Charter to the Corporation, authorising it in future to take the name of the Royal Victoria Hospital, and it was this hospital now complete, and providing accommodation for 300 patients, which was opened by the King.

Their Majesties, whose arrival was announced by the strains of the National Anthem and the thunderous cheers of the people, were received at the entrance gates by the Lord Mayor, who presented the Right Hon. W. J. Pirrie and Mrs. Pirrie. The King and Queen, followed by their suite, were then conducted to the crimson-covered dais, when Mr. William Crawford, J.P., Chairman of the Committee of Management, read the address presented to the King and Queen by the Construction Committee, the Board of Management, and the medical staff. The address tendered, on behalf of the citizens of Belfast and the province of Ulster, their heartfelt thanks and gratitude to their Majesties for their kindness in coming to perform the ceremony, and the great honour conferred on the hospital in naming one of the wards after the late Duke of Clarence.

The King then replied as follows:—

"Gentlemen,—I thank you for the loyal and hearty welcome which you tender to the Queen and to myself, and for the opportunity which you have given us of visiting an institution which has for me a personal interest because of its associations with the name of my beloved mother, and, after the proceedings of to-day, with the memory of our ever-to-be lamented son.

"My previous visits to Belfast have made me familiar with the medical charities, among which this institution has always held a prominent place. It was, therefore, with much interest that I listened to your noble record of successful work done within the walls of the old hospital, and to your account of the spontaneous generosity of your fellow-citizens, which has placed you in a position to carry on that work with increased efficiency in the future.

"I conclude by heartily re-echoing your hope that the new hospital may be even more successful than the old in the alleviation of human suffering and the advancement of medical science."

Their Majesties then inspected the hospital. By request the Matron, Miss M. F. Bostock, had the honour of being presented, and the Royal party then proceeded to the ward which will be known as Clarence, which was named by Queen Alexandra with the words, "I name this ward the 'Clarence' in loving memory of our son."

Both the King and Queen expressed themselves greatly pleased with their visit, and remarked that they had never seen a more beautiful hospital. To the staff of the Royal Victoria Hospital and all connected with it it marked a red-letter day which will not soon be forgotten.

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