

Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



Mr. J. G. Wainwright, treasurer of St. Thomas's Hospital, states in his annual report that the income last year was £86,442, of which £51,588 was ordinary, £11,833 legacies, and £23,020 the proceeds of sale of stock and land. The expenditure was £101,122, namely, maintenance and administration, £62,898; and expenditure on new buildings, etc., £38,223. The charge for paying patients was 12s. per day, which covered not only the cost of maintenance, nursing, medicine, and dressings, but the daily attendance of a resident medical officer.

There is now comfortable accommodation for 185 nurses.

The question of the extension or rebuilding of St. George's Hospital is once again being discussed by the authorities; and two alternatives have been put forward. The site of the present building at Hyde Park Corner (nearly two centuries old) is heavily taxed, but nevertheless very valuable, and would realise a sum sufficient to defray the erection of a new building in another district. But it is urged that its removal from a centre where frequent accidents occur would leave the locality without adequate provision, the nearest hospital being a mile and a half away. To rebuild, however, on the present site would require about £350,000, and unless that sum is forthcoming, there is nothing left but to transfer the institution to another neighbourhood. An alteration of the governing body is anticipated in July, when something definite may be decided and the financial outlook possibly be more hopeful.

June 9th. is Hospital Sunday—the 35th since its foundation—and a special appeal is to be made on behalf of the London Hospitals, many of which are in dire straits for want of funds. Last year the collections amounted to £63,075; 118,830 men, women, and children occupied beds and cots last year, and the average cost of a patient in a London general hospital is £6.

The editors of the *Lancet* have reprinted in a pamphlet the series of articles on the free feeding of school children which have appeared in the columns of that journal from the pen of its special sanitary commissioner. Interesting and complete details are given of the systems adopted by the municipalities of Paris, Brussels, Milan, Vercelli, San Remo, Mentone, Nice, Cannes, Toulon, and Marseilles.

A Central Home for the Birmingham District Nursing Society is to be built in Summer Hill Road, at the cost of £4,000.

The Incorporation of the King's Fund.

The Bill for the incorporation of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, which, so far has escaped opposition, was considered last week by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Unopposed Bills, Mr. Emmott in the chair.

Mr. Cameron, Parliamentary Agent, said that the Bill emanated from the Prince of Wales, the President of the Fund, with the express sanction and approval of the King. The General Council acted as an Advisory Committee to the President, but all the money was vested in the Prince of Wales, who had absolute control of the Fund. Replying to questions, Mr. Cameron said that the subscribers had not been consulted, but that the Council unanimously approved the proposition.

Mr. Caldwell (of the Committee) strongly objected to the whole management of a fund of this character, now amounting to over £1,000,000, being left "imperiously to one man."

The Chairman said that future Presidents might not enjoy the same measure of public confidence as the present President. Was it wise to give all these powers to future presidents? Mr. Beale and Mr. Crombie (of the Committee) expressed the same view and Mr. Caldwell repeated his objections to this "one man power" being given.

The Chairman said the promoters now knew the character of the Committee's doubts on the subject; and adjourned the further consideration of the measure to the next meeting.

We are glad that these points have been raised, as the establishment of an autocracy such as is suggested is undoubtedly contrary to the spirit of the British Constitution. We are aware that members of hospital committees dislike the scheme, and that some of these have consulted together about it, but, as the hospitals depend so much on the King's Fund for support, they have taken no action in the matter.

We would point out, in addition to the points raised above, that the hospitals are not only charitable institutions, but educational establishments, and that (1) the effect of the Bill, if passed in its present form, would be to place such highly specialised departments as the education of medical practitioners and trained nurses largely under the control of the President of the Fund; (2) that the inspection carried out by the Fund at present is of limited efficiency, as there are no women on the Council, and the inspection of the domestic and nursing departments, such important parts of hospital management is not carried out by experts; and (3) there is a danger lest the centralisation of funds should deprive London hospitals of that useful element, the personal interest of the subscribers. In the provinces a warm interest is taken by local subscribers in the institutions they support, but in London many persons now subscribe to the King's Fund, instead of directly to the hospitals, and thus healthy public opinion is not brought to bear on their management in the same way.

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