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EDITORIAL.

THE EMPIRE'S MOTHER HOSPITAL.

The first essential in the promotion of a successful appeal is a good cause, and the second an influential backing. On both these counts the appeal now being made for public support for St. Bartholomew's Hospital should be pre-eminently successful.

Ever since the hospital was founded in 1123, by Rahere—first the King's Jester, and afterwards the pious monk to whom we owe not only the hospital, but the beautiful Priory Church of St. Bartholomew-the Great in Smithfield, where he is buried—the gates of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have been opened in response to the call of the sick and suffering from all parts of the world. Throughout the eight centuries of its activities the spirit of Rahere has brooded over it, and the doctors and nurses of to-day know well that their inspiration to high endeavour, to devotion to the sick and to scientific progress are a direct heritage from their founder, and from all the devoted men and women who have gone before them, and whose atmosphere still pervades the grand old building in which their lives were spent, and which they served so well.

The hospital also owes to bygone benefactors many years of independence of public aid, but, during the last five years, not only has its income decreased, but its expenses have increased by some £30,000 a year; so that, unless substantial help is forthcoming, the hospital will have to reduce its invaluable service to the community—a possibility which is unthinkable in connection with this great City charity. For the first time, therefore, for 150 years, it has been decided to issue a public appeal.

And that appeal has, certainly, the second essential of success. Inaugurated at a luncheon given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, messages wishing it success were read from His Majesty the King and from its new President, the Prince of Wales, and the "People's Peace Year Commemoration Fund" in aid of the hospital was formally established.

A strong plea on its behalf was made on the occasion referred to by the Minister of Health, who received his own medical education at the hospital, and who spoke, from personal knowledge, of the singularly high standard of exactness and duty in its services for many generations, and of the courtesy and consideration shown to the poorest patient. He also said that the Government welcomed the decision of the authorities to provide better accommodation for the nurses.

That accommodation is, indeed, long overdue, both for the safety, as well as the seemly housing, of the nursing staff, and none will welcome this decision more than those past pupils of the nursing school, who have themselves raised £2,700 for this purpose.

We wish all success to the Press appeal now inaugurated, and especially commend to notice the *Illustrated Bart's Chronicle*, the first number of which was issued by the hospital on Saturday last, and the appeal in *Punch* on October 22nd, in which, in a full-page cartoon, Mr. Punch is represented as saying to a charming nurse in charge of a collecting box: "You're not used to begging, my dear, and I am. May I have a box like that, and help?"

We feel sure that the support of so genial a person as Mr. Punch will be warmly welcomed, and that he will use his expert experience as a beggar to good purpose.

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