

day morning the Countesses of Dartmouth and Aylesford "very obligingly stood to receive at the church door."

The gross receipts of these Musical Entertainments amounted to £800, of which the Committee were able to pay over £299 7s. 4d. to the funds of the Hospital.

Notwithstanding the success of these entertainments, public interest in the Hospital for whose benefit they were undertaken deplorably flagged. The funds had fallen to such an extent the building could not be completed; and it was therefore resolved that the remaining (unused) building materials should be sold, and the unfinished structure insured; all further efforts being deferred until more hopeful times—and verily the heart of the benevolent founder must have sunk within him! This was in May, 1769. From this period until 1776, there is but one reference to the existence of the Institution, a notice in the *Gazette* of May 8th, 1776 (the month that saw the temporary abandonment of the Hospital), threatening to punish certain "disorderly persons, who had done considerable damage to the neglected building, by frequenting there to play ball," &c.

It was not until the close of 1776 that any further steps were taken to obtain pecuniary assistance to enable the Committee to complete their work. On the 16th August in that year a meeting was held, and a report on the condition of the building and of the funds was laid before it. It was ultimately decided to call a public meeting of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood. This meeting duly took place on Friday, August 20th, 1776, its object being "to concert the most effectual measures to prosecute the undertaking, and speedily to render this charitable design useful to the public."

The sum of £740 was subscribed at this meeting, and a canvass of the principal inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood decided upon; but this resolution was not

put into practice until February, 1777. As a result of this appeal, a number of the friends of the Institution increased their subscriptions.

The prospects of the Hospital now began to improve, and the building progressed favourably, and in June, 1778, another musical performance was resolved upon, to take place in the following September. This was the first of the triennial festivals, and it produced nearly £800, of which £170 went to the funds of the Hospital.

By the end of July, 1779, the arrangements were completed for the reception of patients, and on the 4th of August a meeting was held, at which Lord Craven was appointed President; and the members of the county (Sir Charles Holt, Bart, and Sir T. G. Skipwith) vice-presidents. It was reported that the Physicians of the town had offered their services as medical officers gratuitously, and Surgeons who were desirous of connection with the Institution were requested to send in applications. On the 13th of September, 1779, the Medical Staff of the Institution was elected, the first Physicians being Dr. Ash (founder), Dr. Smith, Dr. Withering, and Dr. Edward Johnstone; and the first Surgeons, Messrs. Robert Ward, George Kennedy, John Freer, jun., and Jeremish Vaux. The Hospital was formally opened on the 20th of the same month (August), nearly fourteen years after the first meeting was held.

There were at the opening of the Institution only forty beds—less than half the number originally proposed. During the first week ten in-patients were admitted, and four Nurses were appointed at four guineas per annum, with the promise of an additional guinea "if they behave well," and a barber was appointed to shave the patients twice a week, at a salary of ten shillings and sixpence per quarter.

(To be continued.)

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