

## THE QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL, HONG KONG.

The Queen Mary Hospital kept high festival on April 13th, when the opening ceremony was performed by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Andrew Caldecott, to the accompaniment of the noise of 5,000 crackers exploding, and the hand-clapping of some 400 spectators.

The occasion was the culmination of many years' planning and work.

Dr. A. R. Wellington, Director of Medical Services, who received His Excellency and Lady Caldecott, after presenting to the Governor those gentlemen—British and Chinese—who had been prominently connected with the construction of the hospital, addressing the Governor and Lady Caldecott and the large and distinguished audience, including a large percentage of prominent Chinese, gave a brief history of the movement which, begun in 1925, when Sir Cecil Clementi, realising that the Government Civil Hospital, built in 1874, had become obsolete, directed that a scheme of reconstruction should be prepared by the Director of Public Works in consultation with the Principal Civil Medical Officer, and his Chief Officers.

There was considerable diversity of opinion as to the site of the new hospital, but eventually the Pokfulam site was decided upon for in-patients, for in-patient accommodation, leaving the out-patient accommodation in the present position to act as a first aid centre, and to suit the convenience of the local population. The advantages of the Pokfulam site were that being situated in open country on the south side of the island, and five hundred feet above the sea, it was protected from the cold winds of winter by the mountain behind, but open to the full benefits of the summer breezes blowing straight off the sea. With its magnificent view, its position just below the fog line, and its freedom from noise, it was the best site in the island.

The hospital is planned on the modern vertical system with connection by electric lifts to all wings. There are five wings grouped in the form of an "H," an arrangement which offers excellent facilities for lighting and ventilation. There are seven floors in all. The roof which is flat has been designed to permit of its being used as an open-air ward.

Quietness has been studied and the floors and walls are of sound resisting type. The ward doors have double panels with cork sound deadening in the centre, and to obviate slamming are hung on hydraulic spring hinges.

The needs of children have not been forgotten. There is a special children's ward for medical cases on the first floor and another for surgical cases on the fourth floor.

Careful consideration has also been given to the needs of the Nurses' Training School. There are lecture rooms and demonstration rooms in the north-west wing of the ground floor.

In reply, His Excellency Sir Andrew Caldecott said:

"In declaring this hospital open for inspection, I congratulate all who have been engaged in its design and construction on the fruition of their labours, the Medical Department on the enhancement of its opportunities to heal and cure, and the people of this Colony on this new refuge for the sick and suffering. May Heaven's blessing rest upon all who give or receive treatment, on all who serve, and on all who study within these walls."

The party then ascended the entrance steps, and Sir Andrew, using a gold key supplied by the contractors, opened the door, saying:

"I declare this building open for inspection."

Those present then made a tour of the new building, which is the last word in hospital construction, and before they left took tea, hospitably provided in the Nurses' Quarters.

## REVIEW.

## "WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF MRS. SEACOLE."

A book now out of print, and very rarely obtainable, but nevertheless of much interest, is the "Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole" (London, James Blackwood, Paternoster Row), published in 1857, with an introductory preface by W. H. Russell, the noted *Times* correspondent in the Crimea, and "dedicated, by permission, to Major-General Lord Rokeby, K.C.B., by his Lordship's humble and most grateful servant Mary Seacole."

In his preface Mr. Russell writes: "I should have thought that no preface would have been required to introduce Mrs. Seacole to the British public, or to recommend a book which must, from the circumstances in which the subject of it was placed, be unique in literature. . . ."

"I have witnessed her devotion and her courage: I have already borne testimony to her services to all who needed them. . . . I trust that England will not forget one who nursed her sick, who sought out her wounded to aid and succour them, and who performed the last offices for some of her illustrious dead."

Mrs. Seacole, a Creole, tells us that she was born in the town of Kingston, in the island of Jamaica. She had good Scotch blood coursing in her veins, as her father was a soldier of an old Scotch family, and many people traced to her Scotch blood that energy and activity which are not always found in the Creole race, in which have carried her to so many varied scenes. . . .

Visits to England, to New Providence, Hayti, and Cuba, and a return to Kingston where she married Mr. Seacole, but, always a delicate man, he died before long, and soon after Mrs. Seacole had the grief of losing her mother, but she carried "her hurts before." Gradually she succeeded in life, and then came the great fire of 1843 which devastated Kingston and nearly cost Mrs. Seacole her life, but she set to work, and rebuilt her house by degrees, and restocked it, succeeding better than before, for she had gained a reputation as a skilful nurse, and her house was always full of invalid officers and their wives.

In the year 1850, cholera swept over the island of Jamaica with terrible force; while it raged Mrs. Seacole had but too many opportunities of watching its nature, and from a Dr. B., who was then lodging in her house, she received many hints as to its treatment, which she afterwards found invaluable.

Early in the same year her brother had left Kingston for the Isthmus of Panama, then the great highroad to and from Golden California, where he had established a considerable store and hotel, and Mrs. Seacole decided to join him. From Navy Bay the first stage of the journey was by railway to Gatun, about twelve miles distant. For the greater portion of that distance the lines ran on piles, over as unhealthy and wretched country as the eye could well grow weary of. . . . Every mile of that fatal railway cost the world thousands of lives, and labourers could only be tempted from America by unheard of rates of wages.

In Cruces, where Mrs. Seacole stayed for a while, a terrible epidemic of cholera broke out in which she was able to be of considerable use, but at last she, too, succumbed to the dreadful disease, but eventually recovered. She returned to Kingston just in time to find her services needful, for the yellow fever never made a more determined effort to exterminate the English in Jamaica than it did in that dreadful year.

We cannot follow the fortunes of Mrs. Seacole through her many wanderings, but eventually we find her, like a stormy petrel, on the way to the Crimea, with the determination of applying to the British War Office for the post of hospital nurse. Among the diseases which she understood were most prevalent in the Crimea were cholera, diarrhoea, and dysentery, with which her Panama experience had made

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)