CENTENARY OF "GREAT ORMOND STREET"

BY

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In the England of a hundred years ago most children received but scanty consideration. Many of them died in infancy and so escaped much suffering. All too often those who survived were caught up in the industrial revolution. They toiled for long hours in coal-mine or factory, and lived in a deplorable environment of overcrowding and dirt. They were inadequately or wrongly fed. Even among the well-to-do there was little understanding of infant and child nurture, either physical or psychological. The death rate among children was appalling, and no wonder. Of London's 50,000 annual deaths, 21,000 were those of children under the age of 10. Rickets became known as "the English disease."

The grievously stunted, deformed, and battered bodies of many fellow citizens are still to some of us a vivid but grim memory of our youth, and our pathological museums display evidence of diseases of a type and degree now happily mainly a matter of historical interest.

Awakening of the Social Conscience

Yet, despite the general preoccupation of the public with industrial expansion and its indifference to the sufferings of children, the fire of reform was well alight among some social workers, ministers of religion, doctors, writers, and politicians, of whom Lord Ashley (later Lord Shaftesbury) especially championed the children's cause. In such a company, Dr. Charles West must always stand pre-eminent for his service to children. After two years as a medical student at St. Bartholomew's, West completed his course at Bonn, Paris, and Berlin, becoming M.D. Berlin in 1837. Then, after studying midwifery in Dublin, he practised as a physician and accoucheur, lecturing on midwifery at the Middlesex Hospital. But soon his main interest became focused on the diseases of infancy and childhood, a subject upon which he delivered a course of lectures. These were published in 1848 in a book which passed through many editions and was translated into several foreign languages. The material in it was based on West's experience as physician to the Royal Universal Dispensary for Children from 1839.

Institutional provision for sick children was at that time virtually confined to such out-patient dispensaries. The earliest in London was founded in 1796 in Red Lion Square by Dr. George Armstrong, and dealt with 1,200 patients annually. The Royal Universal Dispensary dated from 1816 in St. Andrew's Hill, Doctors' Commons. In 1822 it removed to the Waterloo Road to a special building designed to accommodate 50 to 100 beds. Owing to the death of the chief founder, however, the beds never materialized.

Few children were admitted to adult hospitals in those days. In 1843, of 2,363 patients in all the London hospitals only 26 were children under 10. Guy's had 15 "cribs" in a wooden building "over stables," which were demolished in 1850 and not replaced. Admission of young children to adult hospitals was generally prohibited, except for those requiring "amputation" or "cutting for the stone."

Dr. West Finds a Children's Hospital

West, moved by the urgent need of in-patient facilities for sick children, determined to found a special hospital for them. He had to contend with much opposition. The difficulties of nursing and the risks of infection were cogent arguments against such a project. The early experience of the Foundling Hospital was relevant; of the first 15,000 children admitted only 4,400 lived to grow up.

Yet in Europe there were already 17 children's hospitals, and West knew well of their growing success and value. He was undeterred by opposition and found strong support among senior colleagues, notably Bence-Jones, of Guy's, who gave much help in soliciting influential interest. West visited children's hospitals abroad and elaborated the practical details of his scheme, which was eventually launched at a public meeting on March 18, 1851. Soon it received powerful support. Queen Victoria subscribed £100 and became the first Patron. Lord Shaftesbury became president. Charles Dickens wrote a moving magazine article, and funds began to accrue. With a sum of £2,483 6s. 3d.

FIG. 1.—Dr. Mead's house at 49, Great Ormond Street after being taken over as the "Hospital for Sick Children."

in hand, the provisional committee was emboldened to seek a convenient house in which to make a start; and West happened upon 49, Great Ormond Street, a spacious late seventeenth-century house which had once been the residence of Dr. Mead, physician to Queen Anne, whose professional and social attainments had been matched by his lavish hospitality. The house (Fig. 1) had a large garden and afforded additional accommodation in Dr. Mead's former library and museum.

A lease was arranged and the necessary alterations were made to adapt the reception-rooms as wards and the library as an out-patient department. The institution was first called "The London Hospital for Sick Children," but subsequently the word London was omitted.

In December, 1851, the first matron, Mrs. Willey, was chosen from many applicants, and on January 2, 1852, Dr. Charles West and Dr. William Jenner were appointed physicians, and Mr. G. D. Pollock surgeon, the last-named being succeeded in March, 1852, by Mr. Athol Johnson. On St. Valentine's Day, 1852, the hospital was opened, and three days later the first patient was admitted, Eliza Armstrong, aged 3½ years, suffering from "consumption."

The Founder's Intentions

The accepted aims of the new hospital were:

1. To provide for the reception, maintenance, and medical treatment of the children of the poor during sickness and to furnish advice to the mothers of those who were not admitted.
2. To promote the advancement of medical science with reference to the diseases of childhood and to provide efficient instruction of students in the same.
3. To disseminate among all classes, but chiefly among the poor, a better acquaintance with the management of infants and children during illness by employing the hospital as a school for the education and training of women in children's nursing.

Administrative planning was thorough in detail. Only children from 2 to 12 years of age suffering from diseases peculiar to, or modified in some important respect by, their "early age" were to be admitted, and those "suffering from accidents or external injuries" were excluded. Infants under 2 were considered inadmissible, though exceptions soon came to be made with increasing frequency. Directions for washing, clothing, and diet, particularly the milk supply, were laid down, and facilities for education of the children in the wards and physiotherapy in the garden were arranged from the outset. A special fever ward was provided and close attention given to the control of infection.

The highest available standard of nursing was ensured by careful selection and strict discipline. Striking a patient, accepting a gratuity, or failing to "make children happy" meant instant dismissal. It is remarkable that in those "Sairey Gamp" days the frequent changes of staff recorded were due to incompetence rather than serious misdemeanours. Close attention was devoted to the recording of cases, the giving of formal lectures, and the instruction of students. The practice of the hospital was to be "open to all medical men on presenting themselves." To Dr. Jenner was allotted the formation of a museum and library. No one can doubt that the foundations of "Great Ormond Street" were well and truly laid. Proof was soon manifest in the rapid growth of the popularity of the young hospital. By October, 1853, the out-patient sessions, beginning at 8.30 a.m., were making the visiting doctors late for lunch, and more and more beds were needed. The original 10 became 20, and ultimately 30. Dr. Mead's old house was stretched to its utmost capacity. In 1858, after a successful appeal for funds at a festival dinner at which Charles Dickens presided, the adjacent house, No. 48, was acquired, providing much-needed relief. On the ground floor a "model infant nursery" was inaugurated which proved "an unqualified success."

Years of Expansion

From 1858 to 1872 the work of the hospital expanded steadily. Dr. Jenner retired in 1866, and his place was taken by Dr. Thomas Hillier. Four assistant physicians were added—Drs. George Buchanan, W. H. Dickinson, Sydney Ringer, and Samuel Gee. Mr. Timothy Holmes became surgeon and Mr. Thomas Smith assistant surgeon. The reforms and teaching of Florence Nightingale had already made possible the appointment of a trained lady superintendent and the birth of the hospital's modern nursing tradition.

In the late 'sixties plans were begun for building the special hospital which had always been West's aim. The old houses were becoming increasingly inadequate and troublesome. The foundation-stone of the new building designed by Mr. E. M. Barry, fronting Powis Place, was laid by the Princess of Wales on July 10, 1872, and the structure was completed in 1877 with accommodation for 120 beds, including the North Block for fever cases, the gift of the Misses Cohen, and the chapel, built and very generously endowed anonymously.

Meanwhile, in order to provide for convalescent children and to relieve in some measure the parent institution, the

lease of historic Cromwell House, Highgate, was taken in 1869. This was replaced in 1927 by the present country hospital at Tadworth Court, Surrey. Dr. West finally retired in 1875, having seen his children's hospital well established. To no one man does "Great Ormond Street" owe so much.

In 1880 the original houses, having become insanitary, were demolished. The need for further building became more pressing year by year, and in 1887, to commemorate Queen Victoria's jubilee, the children of the Empire subscribed a large sum and the South Wing, fronting Great Ormond Street, was completed. It was opened on June 4, 1893, the bed complement then being 240. The hospital now had a worthy building (Fig. 2) to which the only significant later addition was the Out-patient Department, the munificent gift of Mr. William Waldorf Astor, opened on August 4, 1908.

The old structure, so well known to many, endured until the birth of the modern hospital in 1937, but so rapid was the progress in paediatrics, in which Great Ormond Street's own pioneer influence never declined, that long before this

FIG. 2.—The second building, which was started in 1872 and added to in 1887 and 1908.

date the building of 1893 had become outmoded. Happily the significance of a hospital is not to be measured in bricks and mortar.

Research and Teaching

The reputation of the Bloomsbury hospital, based on the splendid work of the early staff in research and teaching and by that of their successors, notably Cheadle, Barlow, Lees, Owen, Morgan, and Pitts, was now firmly established and widespread. It was yet to increase and attain international stature. To the hospital's service were attracted men and women of the highest skill and vision as physicians, surgeons, nurses, and administrators.

Intensive study, unceasing investigation and research inspired the daily routine, promoting a steady advance in the knowledge and understanding of the ailments of childhood. The hospital's growing fame drew patients, often with rare diseases, from far and wide, so providing the unique opportunities which still prevail. Doctors from all over the world, and notably from the Empire, came in ever-increasing numbers, so that postgraduate teaching came to be a major activity.

New departments soon sprang up, notably those of bacteriology and radiology, with which the names of Nabarro and Ironside Bruce must always be honourably associated. The names of Garrod, Voelcker, Still, Batten, Colman, Poynton, Thursfield, Robert Hutchison, Langmead as physicians, and those of Arbuthnot Lane, Kellock, Corner, Waugh, Addison, Fairbank, and Tyrrell Gray as surgeons proclaim the quality of those vintage years which preceded 1914.

The end of the first world war presented a new challenge, for it was clear that the old hospital buildings had outlived their day. In wards of 30 beds with inadequate sanitary arrangements, respiratory and gastro-intestinal infections could not be adequately controlled, particularly in infants. More rigid isolation was essential. Moreover, the comfort and health of the nursing staff, the growing demands of modern specialized treatment, research, and teaching could no longer be worthily met. Complete rebuilding became essential. A plan to rebuild the main hospital in the country, retaining only an out-patient department and a small emergency unit in Great Ormond Street, was abandoned, but as a compromise Tadworth Court was acquired with a view to its development as a country branch for suitable subacute and long-term cases. Pavilions were ultimately built in the park, and this branch has proved a valuable asset and offers great potentialities.

The Modern Hospital

Meanwhile, the planning of the new parent hospital was entrusted to Mr. Stanley Hall, and much thought was given to the details by the medical staff. To rebuild completely on the existing site without seriously disrupting the hospital's work presented no small problem. A golden opportunity seemed to offer itself when the adjacent Foundling Hospital site became vacant, but efforts in this direction failed, and it was decided to proceed in stages to minimize dislocation. In 1937 a start was made on the Nurses' House, facing Guilford Street, the foundation-stone being laid by the Princess Royal, the hospital's president. This building, when completed, gained for Mr. Stanley Hall the medal of the R.I.B.A.

The main hospital block was opened in October, 1938, by King George VI and his consort. It has since been dedicated as the Southwood Building in memory of Lord Southwood's outstanding chairmanship. The ward units each accommodate 10 children, four being in separate cubicles permitting complete segregation, and all giving on to open-air balconies. Each unit is equipped with bath-room, lavatories, sluice-room, kitchen, day-room, and parents' waiting-room. Experience has amply confirmed the value of these arrangements. Modern operating suites, routine pathological and research laboratory accommodation, museum, clinical lecture theatre, kitchens, milk-room, and so on are all on the most modern and generous lines. Beds are provided for nursing mothers.

The building of the next block, the new out-patient department, was interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1939. During the intervening years the out-patient work and that of other departments—radiology, records, and physiotherapy—have had to be carried on in buildings which were intended only for temporary use. This has been a grave misfortune, particularly when the demands of postgraduate teaching, expanding special departments, as well as the out-patient work itself have been surpassingly urgent. At long last it is hoped that the rebuilding programme may shortly be resumed. During the war children were evacuated to units in the country staffed by the hospital, leaving only a few beds for children in London, where air-raid casualties were catered for. On September 9, 1940, the hospital building was seriously damaged by bombing. Fortunately no one was injured.

Institute of Child Health

Towards the end of the war a gradual resumption of normal work became possible, and increasing attention was given to plans for the future. Additional special departments, the intensification of research, and the inauguration of the Institute of Child Health were proceeded with. In collaboration with the University of London, the trustees of the Nuffield Foundation, and the local authorities, the Chair of Child Health was founded, and in 1945 Dr. Alan Moncrieff, physician to the hospital, became its first occupant. Under the National Health Service the hospital was designated a "teaching hospital."

Such is the outline of a century of progress from the courageous venture of Charles West and his colleagues in

Dr. Mead's old house to the far-famed hospital of to-day. If in this brief history the doctors' part may seem to take precedence, they all would acclaim the essential contribution made by others: by their nursing colleagues, justly appreciated the world over for their skill, loyalty, and gentle devotion; by the splendid comradeship, wise counsel, and unstinted labour which has always come from the great-hearted lay folk who have served as members of the board of management or as professional administrators and faithful servants; by the general public, who have never failed in abundant generosity.

The fullest realization of the ideal of "Great Ormond Street" would see such a triumph of prevention as would soon empty the hard-pressed beds. That consummation is not yet, and the second hundred years open with no diminution of opportunity or weakening of purpose.

The two illustrations, kindly supplied by Odhams Press, Ltd., are taken from the book by Mr. T. Twistington Higgins entitled *Great Ormond Street* shortly to be published.

SCIENTIFIC EXHIBITION AT JOINT ANNUAL MEETING

The Council of the British Medical Association, in agreement with the Irish Medical Association, has decided to hold a scientific exhibition at the Joint Annual Meeting in Dublin this year (July 3-11). This is the first time that such an exhibition has been held. The exhibition will be in addition to the usual trade exhibition, and will be located in a large hall adjoining the latter. The object is to display new ideas in all branches of medicine to those attending the Annual Meeting.

On this first occasion the exhibition will necessarily be on a small scale. The pattern followed will be the exhibition held at annual meetings of the American Medical Association. Originality in the design of exhibits will be welcomed. Charts, drawings and transparencies, specimens, and other material can be enhanced by a judicious use of light and colour. The expenditure of much money is quite unnecessary. Many teaching hospitals and medical schools, for instance, already have exhibits of their work, and these could be taken to the Annual Meeting as personal luggage. No difficulty with the Customs is anticipated in this connexion.

Details for Exhibitors

A series of booths will be provided for exhibitors. Each booth has three walls, 8 ft. in height. The back wall is 10 ft. wide and the two side walls 6 ft. No part of any exhibit may extend above the top of the booth. A shelf, 2½ ft. from the floor and about 1 ft. wide, will be fixed all round the booth. Chairs will be provided. Fluorescent lamps will be fitted to the top of the walls, but lamps can be omitted on the request of the exhibitor if he wishes to show transparencies or cases with indirect lighting. Electric points (A.C. 200/240 volts) will also be fitted.

The exhibitor will be expected to pay the cost of the preparation, transportation, and installation of his exhibit, but no other expense will fall on him unless he requires alterations to the booth or special construction. Although it is hoped that the latter may not be required, any special demands will be dealt with sympathetically so far as possible. The cost of such alterations will be borne by the exhibitor.

No motion pictures will be shown in the booths, but separate arrangements will be made for these elsewhere. Exhibitors are expected to provide their own transparency cases for slides or x-ray films. There is ample free storage space for packing-cases.

Exhibits should be shown in the name of an individual person (or persons), who must be a member attending the Annual Meeting. The name of the hospital or institution at which he works may appear as part of the address.

The booths will be ready for the installation of exhibits by Sunday, July 6. Installation should be completed by 6 p.m. on Monday, July 7.