

A History of the West Cornwall Hospital Penzance

by

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CHAPTER I.

IN APRIL 1809 the good people of Penzance established the Penzance Public Dispensary and Humane Society. Sixty years later this developed into the West Cornwall Dispensary and Infirmary, and eventually became the West Cornwall Hospital.

The foundation of the Dispensary in 1809 came at a time when England had been at war with France for some years. The Peninsular War was in full swing, and the country had recently received the news of the battle of Corunna and the death of Sir John Moore, and was soon to hear of Wellington's great battle of Talavera.

No doubt the privations of so many long years of war were among the causes of the establishment at this time of so many Dispensaries both in London and various parts of the country.

Be that as it may, the objects for which the Penzance Dispensary and Humane Society was established are set out in an eloquent little pamphlet which is still treasured among the archives of the Institution, and may well have been the work of one of its earliest and most zealous supporters—the Reverend Charles Valentine Le Grice.

Opening with the profound statement:—

“ To remove or to mitigate the sufferings of the poor in seasons of sickness, is one of the first duties and noblest offices of charity.”

It goes on to describe the Dispensary as:—

“ A charity, from which medical assistance may at all times be procured, and which, in acute cases, enters the habitation, and visits the bed of the unhappy sufferer, affords an opportunity of meeting all the diversified evils of sickness combined with poverty and of checking in their first stages those dreadful epidemics which often make such awful ravages among the lower classes of the community.

“ One intention of this Dispensary is to rescue the poor from the malignity of the Small Pox by introducing Vaccination, which is a gentle and safe substitute for that loathsome and fatal disease. Vaccination has already saved a million lives, and its general adoption is encouraged by evidence the most ample and satisfactory. Who will refuse the benefits of a discovery which has immortalised its author and diffused its salutary effects to every quarter of the globe?

“ The recovery of persons in cases of suspended animation,” (this refers to drowning), “ is another part of our plan, the importance of which can be estimated best by those mothers, wives, and children, to whom their sons, their husbands, and their

"The benefits of the Dispensary will be extended to ruptured children by the provision of trusses for them

"The sick poor will also be provided, at the discretion of the Physician, with nourishing food, and other needful comforts which in some cases supersede the necessity of medicine, and in others, assist its operation and accelerate cures.

"These advantages will be afforded gratuitously to those unfortunate persons who are unable to procure them; and the cause of virtue will be blended with the interests of humanity, as no one who is guilty of immorality will be allowed to participate these benefits

"It will not, however, be improper to mention that Dispensaries do much good at a small expense.

In 1805:—

At Plymouth—£174 relieved 1,000 cases.

At Birmingham—£483 relieved 2,500 cases.

At Liverpool—£835 relieved 11,700 cases.

"By a calculation which was made in 1806, it appears that the various Dispensaries in this kingdom relieve 100,000 cases, and save upwards of 20,000 persons from death every year.

"To promote such useful establishments is a felicity which every Philanthropist must ardently desire; and it is a duty which every Christian should deem himself obligated to perform.

"The first charity of this kind was the General Dispensary, Aldersgate Street, London, instituted in 1770. The next was the Westminster Dispensary, founded in 1774. The Medical Asylum was projected in 1776. The London, Surry (sic), and Middlesex Dispensaries commenced in 1778. Similar Institutions have been adopted in most of the large towns of England, Scotland and Ireland; they are also established in many places on the continent, in the West Indies, and in America

"The Medical Gentlemen of Penzance have handsomely offered their services to this Institution; and we beg them to be assured that they will not employ their time and abilities without receiving from the subscribers and we hope, from the poor, the most thankful acknowledgements of obligation. It is particularly requested that the greatest caution may be observed with regard to the objects of recommendation, as it would be unjust to deprive the medical practitioners of any part of their fair profits.

"In concluding this introductory address, we feel it our duty to express our warmest sentiments of gratitude to a family, rendered illustrious by their various and diffusive charities, who originated the present benevolent design, and who have supported it with such distinguished liberality."

It was in these elegant phrases that the introductory pamphlet heralded the opening of the Dispensary.

The family referred to above as being the originators of the Dispensary, was that of a Mr. W. H. Hoare ("of London"), who gave 45 guineas as a donation and became annual subscribers. Sir Richard Acland also gave

From the Minutes Book it becomes evident that the establishment of the Dispensary was mainly due to the interest and exertions of Dr. John Bingham Borlase, M.D., a member of the Pendeen and Castle Horneck family. In association with him were the clergy and the leading men of the town and neighbourhood, whose names can be gathered from the practice at that time of getting each member of the Committee who attended the monthly Meetings to attach his signature to the Minutes. In this way we find the names of:—

W. H. Hoare, Edward Giddy, Richard Oxnam (Rosehill), Sir Rose Price (of Trengwainton), Richard Hichens, T. Broad, Joseph Carne, Richard Moyle, Sam. John, J. Luke, J. Tremenheere, Capt. Halliday, J. Boase, Lemon Hart, and Benj. Branwell.

And of the clergy there are:—

The Reverends Wm. Borlase (Madron), Thos. Robyns (St. Buryan), G. F. Scobell (Sancreed and later St. Just), J. Buller (St. Just), C. Val. Le Grice (Penzance), and later, Uriah Tonkin (St. Buryan), Stephens (Ludgvan), M. N. Peters (Madron), A. Williams, W. Gurney and J. Foxell.

The first President of the Dispensary was Thomas Giddy, the Mayor of Penzance; the first Hon. Treasurer was Richard Oxnam; and the first Hon. Secretary, Mr. Joseph Carne for a very short time, and then Mr. Thomas Read who held office for some years and is notable for his very legible handwriting and the clarity of his Minutes.

In the first list of Subscribers we find, inter alia, the names of:—

John Scobell, John Batten, Thos. and Wm. Bolitho, W. Dennis, L. C. Daubuz, C. N. Noel, M.P., Baron and Baroness de Roebeck, R. Edmonds, T. Woodis, Usticke, Coulson, Gartrell, Marrack, Miss E. Stone, J. Paynter, T. Barham, W. Colenso, Capt. Bains, J. Bodilly, Penzance Humane Society, Capt. Coffin, Col. Shrapnell, Capt. Scobell, R.N., Capt. Giddy, R.N. and Lieut. Millett, R.N.

Many of these names are familiar and still existing in Penzance. To these, in two or three years, were added the names of Lord and Lady Falmouth as regular subscribers, and of Lord de Dunstanville, Sir William Lemon, Wm. Ellis, Jas. Buller, Wm. Praed, Beauchamp, and Pascoe Grenfell, M.P., as giving donations.

In addition to the Subscriptions and Donations the funds of the Dispensary were augmented by regular Collections at the Churches and Places of Worship in the town and district.

St. Mary's Church, Penzance, originally built as a Chapel-of-ease to the parish church of Madron to serve Penzance, was still at this time spoken of as "The Chapel" or "Penzance Chapel." Consequently we find in the Minutes for the year 1810 the following:—

Collections

	£	s.	d.
The Chapel	18	14	0
Methodist Chapel	11	1	6
Baptist Chapel	7	2	6
Independent Chapel	3	10	0

£40 8 0

And also frequent entries such as this:—

"It was unanimously Resolved that the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Reverend Mr. Le Grice for his very excellent and appropriate Sermon preached for the Benefit of this Dispensary at Penzance Chapel on Sunday the 6th May, 1810."

The site of the first Dispensary was on the Terrace in Market Jew Street.

In 1809 Penzance Almshouse, a picturesque little granite building with mullioned windows, erected about the year 1644, stood on the Terrace about fifty yards below the old Market House, on the site now occupied by Heard's music shop and Bennetts' jeweller's shop. It was known as "Buller's Almshouse" from the name of its founder, a former mayor of Penzance.

Two doors higher up was the house of Miss Catherine Davy, the favourite sister of Sir Humphry Davy and the house in which he spent his last stay in Penzance. A few doors higher up again is the house in which he was born.

Sir Humphry Davy is certainly the most famous man Penzance has produced. To most people, even now, he is best known as the inventor of the Miner's Safety Lamp. But his real and much greater claim to fame lies in his being the Father of Anaesthetics. For in 1809 he had recently discovered and demonstrated the possibility of producing general, complete and safe anaesthesia by the inhalation of a gas—nitrous oxide or "laughing gas" as it was called—an epoch-making discovery. The Safety Lamp benefited merely one section of the community, whereas his discovery of anaesthesia was destined to become an immeasurable boon to all mankind.

Miss Davy's house lay two doors above the Almshouse, and, by a coincidence perhaps of happy omen, it was in the house between these two, in this atmosphere of social beneficence, that the "Penzance Dispensary and Humane Society" first came into existence, paying an annual rental of £14 to a Mrs. Rogers at first and later to a Mrs. Davy. The site of this house is now occupied by Mr. Boase's fruiterer's shop.

The original amount raised by subscription totalled £307. Of this, the initial expenditure on outlay amounted to £125 including £22 spent on furnishing the rooms and "fitting up the shop" for "the Apothecary," £10 on instruments, and £60 on drugs.

Some of the drugs came from London—from the Apothecaries' Hall and the firms of Corbyn & Company, and J. Stallard Penoyre (one of whose accounts is in existence and a treasured possession of the hospital). Some came from Bristol, from Ferris, Townshend & Company, and some from Cookworthy, Fox & Company of Plymouth—a firm which is memorable for its Mr. Cookworthy who, in 1745, discovered China Clay in Cornwall near Germoe, and originated the production of "Plymouth Porcelain."

The firm of Jno. Corker Dennis supplied the Dispensary with "Scales and Weights—15/-" and "A Bed Pan—7/-."

An account for "A Wooden Leg—18/-" appears in 1812.

The drugs usually came by sea, and the bills for cost of freightage from a Capt. Treludda and other ship captains appear regularly in the Minutes. Freightage varied from 2/- up to £1 is. and the cost of "Carriage up from Quay" by porter varied from 1/- to 2/-.

"Waggonage of a Box—7/4d." appears in 1812 and probably refers to transit by Stage Waggon.

In the first list of expenditure on outlay there appears an item of £5 7s. 6d. for "Apparatus for recovering drowned persons," which is of interest. The full title adopted by the Dispensary was the "Penzance Public Dispensary and Humane Society." About thirty years before this time the Royal Humane Society had been established in London by a Dr. Cogan and the great Dr. Fothergill in spite of much opposition and ridicule. For the purpose of resuscitation of the apparently drowned they had invented a special apparatus, a peculiar form of bellows (with throat-pipe attached) with an ingenious valve by means of which air could be forced into or extracted from the lungs at will. It is to this apparatus that the above item refers, and in a later Minute it is again referred to as, "A set of suspended animation instruments."

In one of the Minutes of the first Committee Meeting of the Dispensary it was directed that copies "of the Royal Humane Society's paper on the means of recovering drowned persons be printed and distributed to all the Public Houses and other houses on the surrounding coast, under the direction of Dr. Borlase."

This, of course, was long before Artificial Respiration had been thought of or come into use, and when the only treatment for drowning was Bleeding.

And in Rule IV of the Dispensary's Directions we read:—

"In cases of apparent death, from drowning or suffocation, application to be made immediately at the Dispensary, (where the apparatus will be kept) or to anyone of the Medical Gentlemen."

Further, the "Dispensary and Humane Society" offered a reward in money to anyone who had succeeded in resuscitating the apparently drowned. It was laid down in their "Rules and Directions for patients," in these words:—

"Rule V. A reward of one guinea will be paid to any individual or boat's crew, by whose exertions a body is speedily taken up and brought on shore, to be paid by the treasurer, on a certificate of the medical gentleman first called in to assist; and a further reward of two guineas, (or more, at the discretion of the Committee), if the life shall happily be saved.

"Rule VI. A reward of half a guinea will be given to the inhabitant of any house receiving a body supposed to be drowned, who chuses (sic) to accept it."

And so in 1819 the Minutes record, "that the reward of Three Guineas be paid to the Persons who saved the life of George Matthews from drowning on the 22nd day of August last, and that the said reward be apportioned among them as the Physician and Secretary shall on enquiry think meet." And also, "That the reward of half a guinea be paid to the occupier of the House where the above-mentioned George Matthews was lodged."

The work of the Dispensary was carried on by:—

- (i) A Medical Staff.
- (ii) A Housekeeper.

MEDICAL STAFF

Their duties were laid down in the "Rules and Orders" of the Dispensary as follows:—

"Of the Medical Department.

- I. This is to consist of a physician, surgeons, and a dispensing apothecary.
- II. The services of all the gentlemen filling these situations (the apothecary excepted), will be gratuitous in the town of Penzance; and for visiting the patients in the parish of Madern (sic) who shall be duly recommended but unable to attend the Dispensary, the sum of five guineas will be added to the annual stipend of the parochial surgeon.
- III. The physician will attend at the Dispensary twice a week . . . to prescribe for the attending sick, and to provide for the visiting of such as are confined by illness to their own houses. . . . He will be charged with the general superintendence of the whole medical department.
- IV. The surgeons, in monthly rotation, will attend at the Dispensary on the same days and at the same time the physician does, for the purpose of performing surgical operations, and for prescribing for patients in the accidental absence of the physician. They will also visit and prescribe for such medical or surgical cases as shall require being attended at the patients' own houses."

The first Medical Staff consisted of:—

Physician—Dr. J. B. Borlase, M.D.

Surgeons—Messrs. Edward Giddy, William Berryman and Richard Moyle (Junior).

Apothecary—Mr. Paul.

Of the above, Mr. Berryman appears to have been the surgeon who received 5 guineas a year for visiting patients at 'Madern' who were too ill to come to the Dispensary.

"Visitors" were appointed from the Committee and there is an injunction requesting them, "to see such patients at their own Dwelling houses as are not able to attend the Dispensary—that they may be provided with such comforts as the Nature of the Institution may allow."

HOUSEKEEPER.

Mrs. Ann Eva was appointed as housekeeper at "2/- a week, for her trouble and attendance, and for providing Materials for washing the cloths et cetera and for keeping the house clean."

This salary appears somewhat meagre, and probably the desire to augment it accounts for the little bills submitted by her for payment, month by month, and in steadily increasing amounts, "for Sundries"—including leeches! Action about the leeches was taken by the Committee in 1814 and finally, in 1815 her salary was increased to 2/6d. a week "in lieu of former allowances," her duties detailed again as above, and, in addition, her increased pay now allows for, "the occasional use of candle in the shop, and for conveying necessary messages, and that no extra charges be in

Beneath this entry, in a pencil note still legible though very faded by time, we read, "Leeches were previously discontinued," and (overleaf) another Minute refers to the Committee's resolve of "reducing the charges of Ann Eva the housekeeper and that she be warned to quit at Michaelmas if she does not wish to submit to their decision."

In spite of this we find her still in office five years later when her daughter, Jane Eva, is "given the sum of Twenty shillings in consideration of her additional trouble in messages and errands."

NURSE.

Ann (otherwise 'Nancy') Cock acted as the Dispensary's District or Visiting Nurse and receives payment at frequent intervals of sums varying from 1/6d. up to £1 for "Attendances" or "Services" to patients as nurse.

In one instance the entry appears as:—

"Ordered that Ann Cock be paid 1/6d. for an injection administered by her to a patient since dead,"

and from the wording of this entry we are left in doubt as to whether this death should be considered as post or propter hoc!

TREATMENT.

At this period, as has been well said, "Most medical practice was still strutting or shambling along the old paths," and treatment, apart from drugs, seems to have consisted of Bleeding, or, to a much larger extent, of the use of Leeches, if one may judge from the bills for leeches recurring month by month in the Minutes.

For example:—62 leeches in one month costing 15/6d., 56 in the next month at 14/-, 80 at £1, and 112 leeches at 2d. each, 18/8d., and in 1815 an account for, "24 leeches applied to a patient in case of necessity—6/-."

It was probably on account of expense that a Minute occurs later on instructing that, after use, leeches be returned to the housekeeper, "who shall be required to take care of them, for which attention she shall have such remuneration as the Committee may think proper." Apparently some of the leeches were obtained by the patients on the order of the housekeeper only, for a curious Minute occurs in 1814 to the effect, "That no charge for leeches shall be allowed without an order from one of the Medical gentlemen." And in 1815 is a Minute stating, "That the use of leeches at the expense of the Institution be in future discontinued."

Two extracts from the Treatment Record Book of the year 1809, under the name of Mr. Giddy, the Surgeon, are of interest in these days.

The first records the case, in 1809, of a man, aged 54, suffering from Strangulated Hernia. The treatment adopted was, "Taxis—Bleeding—Tobacco Clysters—Warm Bath, Etc.—etc.—etc.—etc." and the result noted was "Died"—which is not surprising as the condition is one which is always urgent and only a prompt operation can save.

The other extract reads as follows:—

"Ann Payne has been in the habit of giving her child for a month past two teaspoonful" (sic) "of Laudanum twice a day. The child is only fifteen months old. He sleeps an hour only after each dose. She began by giving him one drop twice a day and increased it gradually to two teaspoonful!"

After this it is hardly to be wondered at that we now have a Dangerous Drugs Act!

In 1820 appears in the Minutes a warning as follows:—

“Resolved—That from this time forward any Patient using quack Medicines, shall be for ever excluded from the benefit of this Dispensary.”

In 1821 we find the following entry which, from the tone of it, was no doubt at the time considered a valuable advance in treatment:—

“John Paynter, Esq., of Boskenna, has this day presented to the Dispensary an Electrifying Machine, for the use of the Dispensary Patients, and to be for ever the property of the Institution. Mr. Paynter has also assented to the proposal, made by Dr. Forbes, that the Medical gentlemen of the Dispensary shall have the privilege of sending such of their Patients as may belong to their private practice (provided that no interference is thereby given to the business of the Dispensary) to receive benefit from the said electrifying Machine, at the Dispensary only.”

The above statement is interesting and, incidentally, may be regarded as the early foundation of the present Physio-therapy Department of the Hospital.

In addition to drugs, and in accordance with the Introductory Address, we find that beer, porter and wine were also freely ordered as part of the treatment provided by the Dispensary, and there are accounts for, “131 bottles of porter at 5/6d. a dozen,” etc., and in 1828 a Minute, “That in future there be a gallon of Port Wine purchased at one time and that the same be kept in Pint bottles for the use of the patients when it is ordered for them by the Medical gentlemen.”

There was also a considerable distribution of coals to the patients, a bushel at a time to each, during the hard winter months, and a carefully kept record of the patients to whom they were supplied and of the dates.

Lastly, in 1815, by an agreement with the proprietors of “the New Baths” and a subscription of 20 guineas, “of which the sum of 5 guineas has already been paid,” it was arranged that, “The patients recommended by the Dispensary shall be bathed free of all expence.”

But in 1817 this was altered by “The Proprietors and Mortgagees of the Public Baths” who “resolved that the charge for the Hot Baths to Dispensary patients shall in future be one shilling unless such patients shall take an opportunity of bathing when Hot Water is prepared for other bathers in which case the charge shall be sixpence only.”

In 1817 appears in the accounts the following entry:—

“Jan. 7. Chairmen for carrying J. Easterbrook 4 times to hot bath—8/-.”

Meetings of the Committee were summoned by the Town Crier, and we find entries of:—

In 1810, “Town Sergeant summoning Governors—3/6d.”

In 1811, “Messenger and Cryer—3/5d.” and,

In 1812, “The Cryer postponing one Meeting and calling another

The cost of postage of a letter from London to Penzance at this time was 10d., and we have an entry in 1813 of “Postage from Apothecaries Hall” (London) “1/-,” and in 1817 of 9½d for “Postage of letter from Cookworthy, Fox & Company of Plymouth,” acknowledging receipt of £18. The same occurs again a month later.

To us nowadays this seems a somewhat expensive way of obtaining a receipt for payment of an ordinary account.

Such, from a study of the Minute Books, appears to have been the origin of the Dispensary and its work for the first few years of its existence.

Month by month the Committee met and leisurely and solemnly recorded in the Minutes eulogistic votes of thanks:—

- I. To the Chairman, for “his impartial and upright conduct in the Chair,” or, again “for his proper conduct and attention in the Chair.”
- II. To the Medical Staff, for their “great and humane attention to the patients,” and
- III. To the Secretary for his “constant and unwearyed,” (sic) “attention to the interests of this Dispensary.”

CHAPTER II.

1813 — 1853.

In May 1813 occurred the death of Dr. J. B. Borlase, one of the founders and the prime promoter of the Dispensary.

With expressions of unrestrained regret and almost of dismay the Committee recorded "the death of their lamented friend and Leader, Doctor Borlase," and immediately summoned a full Meeting of the subscribers "to take into consideration the state of the Dispensary in consequence of the death of Dr. Borlase."

To this is added, in the records, a touching tribute to his memory and his good work from his colleagues the three surgeons of the Dispensary.

It is followed by a statement of the number of Dispensary patients treated by him during his four years of office which amounted to a little over 400 patients in each year, making a total of 1733 for the whole period.

The death of its founder, Dr. Borlase, severed the first link in the life of the Dispensary, and in August of the same year (1813) another link parted. For in that month the Dispensary moved from its original home on the Terrace to "the Dwelling House and Premises in the Chapel Street late in the occupation of Mr. Joseph Batten, Attorney at Law, deceased."

The exact site of this house is uncertain but seems to have been on the site of the house at the eastern side of the corner of Voundervour Lane which leads from Chapel Street into Regent Square.

Here the Dispensary remained until 1823 when it removed to a house a little higher up the street, now No. 19, Chapel Street and next door to the present Wesleyan School and Chapel.

This house and its neighbour (No. 20) were originally one house which was known as "Baines' House" and contained a large wainscotted room known as "The Banqueting Hall." The house was reputed to be haunted.

The whole property was bought by a Mr. Giddy, and through him Number 19 was purchased by the Dispensary for £460.

On Dr. Borlase's death the post of Physician to the Dispensary was filled successively by Dr. Paris (1813—7), Dr. John Forbes (1817—22), and Drs. Henry Boase (1822—6) and Thos. Foster Barham (1822—8), the two latter acting jointly from 1822 to 1826.

In 1822 Dr. James Montgomery wrote offering his services to assist the above, which were accepted, and on Dr. Barham's resignation in 1828, Dr. Montgomery became sole Physician. Thus began his family's connection with the Dispensary in that capacity which through its three generations was to be continuous and unbroken for eighty years until the death of his grandson, Dr. Hugh Montgomery, in 1908.

The following entries from an early Order Book are of some interest:—

"At Meeting of the Committee June 4th, 1822, His Worship the

Resolved—That the large Bedstead belonging to the Dispensary be burned; as it appears to be full of Bugs."

And, a little later

13 Aug: "Pair of sheets to M. Harry whose son is scalded dreadfully at the Quay," and this is followed by

21 Aug: "Ordered Materials for ointment for the above mentioned case as much will be wanted for it."

In January 1824, is an entry to the effect that Mr. Wm. Berryman, "the Dispensing Apothecary, be given permission of the Committee to go to London for the improvement of his professional abilities for the space of two months." And two years later we find the entry "that Mr. Wm. Berryman be the Dispensing Apothecary for the ensuing year; and that a gratuity of Ten guineas be made to him for his attention to the duties of his office on condition of his visiting the patients of Madron and Gulval parishes whenever they require to be attended in their own houses." This was in addition to his salary.

In December 1822 the Committee began to contemplate adding hospital beds to the Dispensary, and we have the following entry in the Minutes:—

"That it appears to this Committee that the building of a House for this Institution to consist of the necessary apartments and also of a few wards for the admission of fever cases is a very desirable circumstance."

And a little later we find:—

"That the present House is too small and inconvenient for the purposes of this Institution, and that it appears expedient to this Meeting that a new House shall be built or provided for the purposes of this Institution, and especially for enabling the Dispensary to receive patients under its roof, when particular occasion requires."

Accordingly a Sub-committee was formed, "to make enquiry what the ground and the building such an House would be," and shortly after we find the Sub-committee were empowered to purchase, "the piece of ground in Jennings Lane belonging to the Reverend U. Tonkin, if it could be procured for the sum of £100 or less."

As for the building, it states that "the plan is made by an experienced Architect and the estimate for executing it amounts to £530."

This project seems to have been found impracticable and was dropped.

The next attempt was made in 1826 when, apparently, the Penzance Savings Bank was about to put up a building for its own use, and accordingly we find that the Dispensary Committee resolved that a special Sub-Committee "do communicate with the Savings Bank on the propriety of uniting in the erection of a building suitable for both these establishments— and do make enquiry after a proper spot for that purpose, and in case they shall consider the plan a feasible" (sic) "one—that a special Meeting of the Subscribers be called to decide it."

Following hard on this we have:—

"Resolved:—That application be made, by Mr. Joseph Carne, to Mr. Francis Paynter to know the lowest terms on which he will sell forty feet by sixty of his ground at the end of the

sketch of the house which will be necessary for the Dispensary be prepared by Monday next, the 11th instant, when a general Meeting of the Subscribers be called to take this matter into consideration."

This project also seems to have come to naught—probably all for the best. At any rate the idea of deliberately planning to combine a hospital and a bank in one and the same building appears to us in these days to be as absurd as it is unthinkable.

Meanwhile the work of the Dispensary went steadily on and the Annual Reports showed:—

Year	No. of Patients	Cost per Patient	Total Expenditure	Total Receipts	Balance in hand
1818	478	5/1d.	£121	£162	£192
1822	699	4/5½d.	£156	£187	£31
1824	412	5/8d.	£116	£179	£62.

In April 1839, at its "Thirtieth Anniversary Meeting," the Committee reported that there had been nearly 1,200 patients during the past year and that sometimes 100 patients had come on one day, and that "as it was impossible to do justice to many of them," the Committee had decided to make an innovation and appoint "a person to attend entirely to the duties of Surgeon and Apothecary," who should be a medical man, "resident in the Dispensary who shall give all his time and services to the Institution (acting at all times under the direction of the Physician)," and "on the condition that he is not to practise in any other way in this town while he continues in the situation."

"The sum of Seventy Pounds per annum," was the salary offered for this whole-time post, and in a month it was filled by a "Mr. Edwin Edmonds of this town, Surgeon." To make way for him the Surgeons of the Dispensary were transferred from the active to the consulting list, and one of them, Mr. Richard Moyle (one of the original three Surgeons), took the opportunity to retire from the Dispensary duties altogether.

He, poor man, met a tragic end shortly after, being thrown from his trap outside his house in Market Jew Street and killed.

The arrangement of a Resident Surgeon seems to have gone well for six months when Mr. Edmonds sent in his resignation, and once again the Dispensary reverted to its former arrangement, Mr. J. T. Millett being re-appointed to the post of Surgeon at £30 per annum.

In 1839 a Mr. Barnard, Surgeon Dentist, offered his services and became the first Dentist to be appointed to the Dispensary.

Among entries in the Minute Book of this period which are of interest are the following:—

An application (under the Humane Society's rules) "made to the Meeting by John Phillips and others for saving the life of (blank space) and of Obadiah Hicks and others, for saving the lives of Thomas Gerrans and Alexander Bosanco from drowning on the 15th of September last when their boat upset and two of their companions perished at about a mile from the Pier Head," was considered. It was "resolved that the Governors regret

And, "5 May, 1843—Resolved that the thanks of the Committee be given to the Mount's Bay Regatta for 1838 for their Donation of £11 2s. Proceeds of 2 Silver Goblets which were not contended for."

SMALL POX.

Up to this period (1840) Smallpox was still a disease of frequent occurrence. There was, of course, no Notification of Infectious Diseases Act in existence, and smallpox was regarded by the general public very much as we regard an outbreak of Influenza in these days. Usually a doctor was not called in except in severe cases.

Vaccination (introduced by Jenner in 1796) was not yet provided by the State or universally carried out, although its value was thoroughly recognised. Immunity from smallpox was acquired by the individual more often through having had an attack than from successful vaccination, and it was not till 1840 that the first Act was passed which provided vaccination gratuitously to the patient at the expense of the State.

It was owing to the difficulty hitherto of the poor to obtain vaccination that one of the self-imposed duties of the Dispensary, as laid down in the Rules at its Foundation, had been, "to rescue the poor from the Smallpox by encouraging vaccination," and consequently in 1840 during an epidemic, when their supply of vaccine was probably running short, we read:—

"Resolved that the Institutions at Exeter, Plymouth and Truro be written to with a view of establishing an amicable exchange of vaccine matter," and later,

"Resolved that it be an Instruction to the Surgeon to use every endeavour to keep up a constant supply of Vaccine Lymph," and to see that the Institution be not "deficient of such valuable protection."

In his annual Medical Report to the Dispensary for 1841 Dr. Montgomery states:—

"For several years Smallpox has been of common occurrence, not only in this district but generally over the kingdom. During last year it prevailed in this Town to a greater extent than ever, and now appears to have ceased, or nearly so, from a want of individuals susceptible of its influence. While at its acme many cases of great severity occurred, and the mortality was proportionably large; . . . As professional assistance is not often sought for in Smallpox, it is impossible for me to offer any statistical information beyond the fact—for which I am indebted to Mr. James, Registrar—that Eighty-four deaths took place in Penzance between April 21, 1840, and the present time." (April 21, 1841). "Not more than two of the above number had been successfully vaccinated, and not more than six or eight in all."

And he continues:—

"Eighteen cases of Fever were admitted."

These were probably cases of Typhoid fever; and he goes on, "The admissions for Influenza were Twenty-six; this complaint is now of such very frequent appearance, as to be regarded as one of the ordinary endemic diseases of the country."

In 1840 the Reverend John Foxell, a Methodist Minister, wrote, "announcing his being compelled by severe indisposition to resign his office as one of the Secretaries." He had been a very active member of the Committee from the foundation of the Dispensary and joint-Secretary for fifteen years, and the Committee accorded him, "their unanimous thanks for his constant laborious and effective services from the foundation of the Institution."

He continued to serve on the Committee for some years still.

Although a generation had passed away since the end of the Napoleonic War, Window Tax, which was one of the War taxes, was still being levied, and in 1840 we read that, "The Collector of Taxes having charged the Establishment £6 3s. 6d. as for twenty windows," the Committee appealed, "against this charge, on the ground of a very small part of the House being occupied by the Housekeeper for domestic purposes." The appeal seems to have been successful for the amount of tax eventually paid was £3 17s.

In 1846 the number of patients treated had risen to 1335 and in 1847 to 1377. The majority of these being medical and not surgical cases they came under the care of Dr. Montgomery, and to him we find the Committee frequently according votes of thanks and referring to him as, "our excellent, talented and zealous physician," and in 1847 we find the following entry:—

"Resolved that in order to express the high esteem and gratitude which we entertain towards Dr. Montgomery for the important and gratuitous Services rendered by him, through the medium of this Institution, to the public at large during an uninterrupted period of Twenty years, a Subscription be entered into for the purpose of presenting him a piece of plate as a lasting testimony of our approbation and regard."

Accordingly a special Sub-committee was formed "to carry out this desirable object," and "with an understanding that no greater subscription than Two guineas be received from any one person."

Collection of these subscriptions seems to have been somewhat leisurely, for a year later, at the Annual Meeting, we read:—

"It is high time to carry out this measure. To every Subscriber a note setting forth the circumstances was sent by the Secretaries. The list of the Subscriptions will be laid on the Table. This we recommend being closed, and the amount laid out in a Tea and Coffee Service and Salver if the amount should be found sufficient, and presented to the Doctor at a meeting of which notice should be given to the several Subscribers."

In contrast with this record of long and valuable service we come, on almost the next page of the Minute Book, to the affair of Jane Eva, the housekeeper, which, with its comedy and its insight into 'life,' equals the best of so many good things to be found in the older Minute Books.

In 1848 Mrs. Ann Eva and her daughter Jane, in succession to her, had between them filled the post of housekeeper from the very foundation of the Dispensary—an unbroken period of almost 40 years—at a salary of 2/- a week and later of 2/6., with some additional 'sundries.'

In July 1848 we read the following:—

"The President reported that the Conduct of the Housekeeper was bringing great discredit on the Institution—not only from the

late Hours at which the Front door is continually kept open at night but also in respect to the parties frequently seen there. During the Hours of Divine Service on Sunday Evening last the passage was occupied by disorderly Females until the Police was sent for to dislodge them.

"Further, that she had been in the constant habit of taking in Lodgers without the sanction of any Member of the Committee. And in fact that she is seen several times a day in the Door of the 'Turk's Head' Public House on the opposite side of the Street. This matter is referred to the next meeting of the Committee."

At the next monthly Meeting it was resolved to call a Special Meeting, "to decide as to the propriety of dismissing the present Matron," and accordingly a week later at a large and fully representative Special Meeting it was, "Resolved that from the increased Incompetency of Jane Eva to fill the office of Matron of this Institution she be discharged, and, provided she quit the house at once, that she be paid the sum of £1 12s. 6d. as 13 weeks' wages together with 7/6d., to provide herself Lodgings."

At the same Meeting they appointed a Mrs. Wright as Housekeeper at a salary of 2/6d., a week, with her husband George Wright to "assist and make himself generally useful, for which purpose sums at the rate of 20/- a year for collecting the Subscriptions, 20/- a year for messages, etc., and 60/- a year for providing Coal for the Physician's and Surgeons' Rooms for the Committee Room and Shop whenever wanted—will be allowed by the Institution."

This arrangement seems to have proved quite satisfactory for George and Ann Wright remained in office until the Dispensary moved to its new quarters in St. Clare Street about 25 years later.

CHAPTER III.

1853 — 1870.

The year 1853 was one of importance and of good omen in the history of the Dispensary.

In the first place, at the Annual Meeting of that year Dr. James Barclay Montgomery wrote offering his "services to assist his father in the Medical Department and his offer was thankfully accepted."

The other event of importance, and one which at once altered the whole outlook for the future, was the intimation conveyed to the Committee at this Meeting, "of the intention of a most benevolent Lady of this place to add largely to the funds of the Institution with a view to a great extension of its benefits." On her death two years later, "this noble-minded lady," proved to be a Miss Stone who had bequeathed the sum of £1,500 to the Dispensary subject to certain conditions to be carried out by the Trustees she had appointed.

A Sub-committee was at once appointed to confer with these Trustees, and, in our mind's eye, we can readily conjure up an amusing picture of this meeting consisting of nine gentlemen with no previous knowledge of hospital finance or management, and without the assistance of a single member of the medical profession who might at least be supposed to have some knowledge of the subject.

On one side of the table sit the four Trustees (two of them bankers), men of sound business instinct and bound, as Trustees, to make sure of full and complete security before consenting to part with the funds committed to their trust. On the other side sit the five members of the Sub-committee, sanguine, as all good hospital-committee members should be, and hopeful, very hopeful, of the possibility, at long last, of carrying out the charitable project which up to now had had to remain in abeyance for want of the necessary funds.

One of the conditions laid down by the Testatrix was that the money was not to be used for the ordinary expenses of the Dispensary, nor for the cost of building a hospital, but only for "attaching an Infirmary" to the Dispensary, consisting of not more than eight beds.

It was estimated by the enquiries of the Committee, "that the aggregate annual cost of such an Infirmary for eight beds together with the ordinary expenses of the Dispensary for the same period will be £400."

After lengthy consultation the conference resulted in the offer of the Trustees to hand over the amount of Miss Stone's bequest when an equal amount had been raised by public subscription.

Forthwith an able and eloquent appeal (equal to any B.B.C. Appeal of these days), was issued to the Subscribers over the signatures of Messrs. D. P. Le Grice, Walter Borlase and Thos. Cornish, setting out that since 1828 the Dispensary had now (in 1856), treated "upwards of 31,000 sick persons . . . drawn from a district embracing a population of 64,208 souls, and stretching from Phillack and Gwinear on the east, and from Perran-Uthnoe

first to call your attention to the great disproportion which exists, in many of the parishes of your district, between the number of patients relieved and the number of guineas subscribed. There are many rich and populous parishes sending their twenty, thirty, forty, and even in one case seventy-five patients to your Dispensary without subscribing one single penny to your funds. . . . You will find that last year you have relieved 260 persons from the mining population, or nearly one patient in every five of your total relief, whilst the name of no single Mine appears, or ever did appear, upon your subscription list. Your relief to this mining population . . . comes to the assistance of the miner precisely where his own resources fail him. The Doctor and Sick Club of the mines relieve only the miner himself, and do not extend to the relief of his family; you, by your rules, though not always in practice, exclude the miner (having Club-relief) but receive his family, and thus give him the very aid of which he stands in need. The proposition is self-evident, that in thus helping the miner you help the adventurer; and we therefore appeal to all adventurers in mines to give you their aid, and to become subscribers to your Institution.

In the course of the last four years you have relieved upwards of 1,000 persons from the mining population; and . . . mines are to a certain extent public bodies, or at all events bodies which can afford to give subscriptions more handsome than we ask, without themselves feeling the expenditure. . . . Before closing our Report we will take leave to allude to another subject,"—and then comes the subject of the Stone Bequest and the project of establishing an Infirmary; followed by:—

"That your cause is good there cannot be a doubt. The eastern part of the county has needed and provided its Infirmary at Bodmin; Truro . . . ably supports another, but your district, more numerous than either of the others, having a population more exposed to accident and to the diseases peculiarly incidental to men occupied in mining, and therefore having the greatest need of an Infirmary, possesses none," and further, the writers point out that Truro Hospital is not really available to the inhabitants of this district owing to the distance, the expense of getting there, not to mention the danger of transporting "cases of severe accident or extreme illness," such a distance.

And finally, in peroration we have:—

"How many valuable lives might have been saved, how many parents might have been spared to helpless children, how many families saved from utter destitution, if some such institution as that for which we plead had been within the reach of the accident that was a death-blow, merely because the sufferer was too far from help, too far from the needed medical attendance, and too poor to purchase the mere necessities of the sick room."

A fine appeal surely, and worthy of a generous response! Meanwhile a special Fund for the proposed new Infirmary had at once been opened in Penzance and rapidly rose to £460 headed by:—

"William Bolitho, Ponsandane—£105.

Mr. Bolitho and his three sons—£105."

At the Meeting at which the Sub-committee reported on its conference with the Trustees no time was lost and it was forthwith decided, "that the same to be given to the Institution be."

And further, it was decided to ask, "whether the Town Council will grant the whole or any portions of the Building formerly occupied as a Workhouse for the proposed Infirmary."

But, in spite of all this effort and enthusiasm on the part of the Committee, it took nearly another 20 years before the Infirmary was established.

During the first three of those years occurred the deaths of Mr. William Carne (Treasurer) and the Reverend C. V. Le Grice, both of them Members of the Committee since the foundation of the Dispensary and always very active supporters; and three years later their equally active collaborator Mr. Richard Pearce (Secretary) died.

New Members were appointed, among them being the Reverend Philip Hedgeland in 1861, and the Reverend W. W. Wingfield in 1863.

In 1864 Dr. Richard Hosking was appointed as one of the Surgeons and later (in 1868) as the Acting Surgeon with the salary of £20 a year.

In 1859 Brunel's Saltash Bridge was completed and the railway opened up into Cornwall, and in the Minute Book in 1860 we find an interesting item of a charge of 2/4d., for "Steam Carriage" on a parcel of drugs from Bristol, which is probably the record of the first charge for Railway carriage of a parcel ever paid by the Dispensary.

Another item of interest of this period is (in 1854) the agreement with the "Local Board of Health" to lay on to the Dispensary the new Water Supply from "the Works of the Town Council" at a cost of £3 4s. 3d.

CHAPTER IV.

1870 — 1875.

The project of establishing an Infirmary had made no progress since the great Appeal of 1856, but in 1870 things began at last to take a turn.

At the beginning of that year the Committee had dropped back to the idea of maintaining a hospital of three beds only, at an estimated annual cost of £200; but on June 1st, 1870, they considered even this as beyond their available means, and instead of it, they proposed to give an annual subscription of Ten Guineas to Truro Hospital to accommodate any Dispensary patients who required Indoor treatment.

Luckily this decidedly ignominious solution (which might well have resulted in the loss to the Dispensary of the Stone Bequest) was overruled at a Meeting a fortnight later (June 15th), thanks chiefly to a Special Report from Dr. Barclay Montgomery and Dr. Hosking which was strongly backed by the Reverends Hedgeland and Wingfield. The Report very ably urged:—

1. The great desirability of having a hospital of 8 beds at Penzance; and
2. To avoid the heavy cost of building, the advisability of re-considering "the capabilities of the old Poors-House" (sic) for this purpose.

After due consideration it was unanimously resolved that the Committee be authorised "to negotiate for the purchase of the old Poor House at St. Clare for the purposes both of a Dispensary and Infirmary," in accordance with "the plan proposed by the Medical Officers in their Report."

A fortnight later (June 28th), the Committee at last took the plunge and authorised the Chairman (Mr. N. B. Downing) and Secretary (Mr. J. Hallet Batten) to purchase of Mr. James (the then owner) "the portion of the Old Workhouse Premises described by the Chairman, at the sum of £500, and at the same time to thank Mr. James for his generous offer to contribute £50 towards the amount of the purchase money."

At the same time the Trustees of the Stone Fund agreed to pay over annually the whole of the interest on the £2,400 (which the Fund now totalled), provided "that, with an annual income of £400, an Infirmary of 8 beds can be maintained and the Dispensary efficiently carried on as heretofore."

The part of the Workhouse premises purchased by the Dispensary was "the upper plot." The lower plot—the old Prison Premises—had already been purchased by the Wesleyans for a Sunday School, but, on being approached, they now agreed to sell to the Dispensary a portion of this, viz:—"The garden and yard outside the prison walls including the Tread-wheel sheds and Cells on the north side"—the oakum cells.

"The cost of the new Infirmary would be about £1,120, and of this

annually," by subscriptions, "for the existing dispensary. It was anticipated that the other £110 would be forthcoming by increased and new subscriptions and by a Hospital Sunday throughout Penzance."

Such was the Report of the Sixty-second Annual Meeting held on June 19th, 1871, and to us it appears a decidedly cold and formal announcement of the long-delayed event—the birth of the West Cornwall Infirmary.

Certainly the birth had been tedious and difficult—the project had been under consideration ever since 1822—almost 50 years—and the difficulties had seemed never-ending.

Luckily "the new arrival" was destined to prove a strong and healthy child, but, even so, at the moment of birth, it had been in great jeopardy of having a most unnatural twin to share its cradle and foul its outlook.

For Penzance had for some years felt the need to possess some accommodation for cases of infectious disease, especially those landed from ships, and the Committee at this same Annual Meeting took into consideration the idea of establishing wards for infectious cases in the new Infirmary. In return, (and here was the real lure of the project), the Town Authorities were to pay down £100, contribute ten guineas a year, and provide the necessary nursing and food for the infectious cases. A Dr. Buchanan, a Government Inspector under the Board of Health, had been down and given it as his opinion that nothing could be more suitable than to use wards in the new Infirmary for this purpose, and, oddly enough, the idea does not seem to have been opposed by the Medical Staff of the Infirmary. But, fortunately some of the non-medical members of the Committee expressed views very strongly opposed to this really fatuous idea, and, by a majority of 10 to 5, it was decisively vetoed at this Meeting.

But—it had been a narrow escape!

Work was at once started on the old Workhouse buildings to carry out the alterations, repairs, drainage and (gas) lighting necessary to fit it for its work as an Infirmary.

The old Dispensary in Chapel Street was now sold to Miss E. J. Carne for £380, and as the time went on it was found that only £112 had to be raised to complete the cost of the new Infirmary and a further £200 to furnish it. It would be necessary to raise another £115 a year (by subscription or otherwise) to meet the annual cost of maintenance of the Dispensary and Infirmary which was estimated at £450.

On October 6th, 1871, the Committee held their first Meeting in the new Infirmary buildings, and the Dispensary was opened there on October 17th, 1871.

On February 2nd, 1872, "the architect, Mr. J. Trouson, Jr., reported the completion of the building and carpentry contracts," and the drainage and lighting. It only remained now to furnish sufficiently to open it as an Infirmary of 8 beds, and this the Committee proceeded to do slowly, hoping meanwhile to obtain further additional subscriptions sufficient to meet the cost of maintenance before declaring the Infirmary open to receive In-patients.

And so the Spring and Summer of 1872 were passing when, suddenly, on July 26th a bombshell descended on the Committee in the shape of a letter from the Town Clerk containing an "application of the Sanitary Committee

of the whole or some portion of the Infirmary Buildings," for cases of Smallpox.

An epidemic of Smallpox was raging in the town, and so far, there had been 100 cases with 12 deaths, and there were still 15 cases in the Borough.

A Special Meeting of the Committee was at once called to consider this vital question, and, judging by the Minutes, it proved to be one of the lengthiest and most heated Meetings in the whole annals of the Institution.

The Chairman, Mr. J. R. Branwell, being also the Mayor, found himself in the difficult position of having to hold the balance true between the interests of the Dispensary and Infirmary on the one hand, and the urgent need of the Borough on the other.

In summing up the situation, after an immense amount of talk on both sides, he "protested indignantly," against Mr. D. P. Le Grice (an ardent supporter of the Dispensary), who had characterised the request of the Borough as "preposterous" and finally he very skilfully swayed the Meeting from throwing out the proposition altogether to a favourable consideration of it, and before breaking up, they agreed to comply with the request for a temporary loan of the Infirmary to the Borough. It was at once arranged for the Dispensary to return temporarily to its former habitat in Chapel Street by permission of its new owner Miss Carne.

Accordingly the Infirmary opened as a Smallpox hospital on August 13th, 1872, on loan for six months. At the end of this time the Borough obtained permission to extend their temporary tenure for another six weeks, that is, until March 15th, by which date the Dispensary Committee firmly requested them to vacate the Building.

On compliance with this the buildings were disinfected, repainted and whitewashed, and the Dispensary re-opened there on March 24th, 1873.

At the Annual Meeting in April, 1873, it was stated that the number of Out-patients treated at the Dispensary for the year had been 1,116, and that the average annual number for the past thirty years had been 1,240.

At this Meeting Mr. C. C. Ross was appointed Secretary in place of Mr. J. Hallet Batten, resigned.

The Committee proceeded to discuss the opening of the Infirmary without further delay. It was decided to provide for 8 beds, but, owing to insufficient maintenance income at present, to open the Infirmary with 4 or 6 beds to start with.

A Sub-committee was appointed to draw up a Set of Rules for the future management of the new Institution.

In June, 1873, Dr. Montgomery, Sen., died. As Physician and Consulting Physician he had been connected with the Dispensary since 1822, a period of 51 years and had rendered to the Institution most valuable and untiring service.

And so the year passed on and was nearing its close when, on December 24th, 1873, a Special General Meeting was held and it was, "Resolved to open the long-talked-of Infirmary on January 1st, 1874. The step is a bold one as there is no certainty, although there is a very strong probability, that the Subscribers to the Dispensary will largely increase their

It was a good sign! The Committee was at last taking its courage in both hands, and beginning to over-ride the ultra-prudence and extreme caution of some of its Members, and to function as all good Hospital Committees should—trusting in the good sense and generosity of the public.

On December 29th, 1873, inspired by the Secretary (Mr. C. C. Ross), there appeared in the "Cornish Telegraph" and the "Western Morning News" a description of 'The New Infirmary' which stated that:—

"The whole building is so extensive . . . that the institution will start on a basis of comfort and order, without any crowding, that will be most favourable to its opportunities. It occupies three sides of a triangle, having a frontage of 140 feet; this encloses a courtyard, and the whole fronts a large garden . . . The dispensary block is quite distinct from . . . the Infirmary . . . On the first floor are the wards as at present established, a Men's ward with four beds and a Female ward with three beds, in addition to a separate room with one bed **for a patient whose maintenance might be partially or wholly paid for.** Further there is a part of the house in which a patient or patients with contagious disease might be accommodated. This can be entirely shut off from the rest of the building; having separate kitchen . . . and entrances . . . It may be questioned whether any Infirmary of such a number of beds was ever started with such complete accessories. Indeed the beds can be greatly increased with the same office and store accommodation. The number of rooms in the building, independent of small offices, is twenty-five.

"The entire cost of the purchase of the building, and its alteration and furnishing, has been about £1,200."

Such was the description of the new Infirmary—a hopeful one certainly, coming from such a timorous Committee.

It is interesting to note that, among other sources from which funds were provided for the expenses of furnishing the new hospital, was the Balance of the local "Sick and Wounded Franco-German War Fund," then lying at the two banks in Penzance and amounting to £55.

This and a host of similar details of Finance, etc., were so important in the eyes of the Secretary that they occupy five foolscap pages of his Minute Book. Then at the end of the five pages, with the utmost brevity and almost as an unimportant after-thought, he blurts out the following announcement of an appointment of the utmost importance to the hospital, and, as it happens, of the first such appointment in its history:—

"The Committee have nothing further to report except that the Services of a Professionally-trained Nurse with the highest Testimonials and of a General Servant have been secured."

So the Minute reads—certainly one of the gems of the whole collection!

Tempora mutantur . . . but, even so, to us nowadays such an apparent lack of appreciation of the importance and the value of Trained Nurses in the working of any hospital seems quite unintelligible.

It will be noticed that the above Minute does not even mention the name of the "Professionally-trained Nurse," whose duties were **to take sole charge, night and day**, of the five patients, and, in addition, act as Matron of the hospital.

She was a Miss E. E. Appleyard, and she had the honour of being

that time have served the West Cornwall Hospital so devotedly, and contributed so much to the success and efficiency it has attained.

Miss Appleyard served for a year with a salary of £27 per annum, and on her resignation was succeeded, in March, 1875, by a Mrs. Groser, with salary raised to £35 a year.

In March, 1874, Mr. W. H. Julyan was appointed as Dispenser. He continued in that office for many years, to which he added that of Assistant Secretary and later of Treasurer.

At the First Annual Meeting of the Infirmary, on 20th January, 1875, the Secretary reported that the total number of In-patients (11 months) had been 72, of which 49 were surgical cases. The average number had been 7 a month, and there had been "as many as 11 patients in at one time." The cost per patient had been £4 6s. 8d., and the cost per bed was £39. The number of beds was 8. The number of Out-patients was 1,226 for the twelve months.

In the Minutes of this same Meeting appears the following:—"The Committee have to record, with great thankfulness, that several very important and successful operations have been performed by the Attendant Surgeon."

The above, from its rather cryptic wording, comes near being another gem—though of less lustre!

Yet, in spite of this, it seems unfortunate that the Committee had to be informed that one patient had had to be sent to Truro hospital for operation as his case required some special instruments which were too expensive for the West Cornwall Infirmary to purchase!

Another matter of interest at this Meeting was that it was resolved that six "Lady Visitors be appointed to aid the Committee with a view to the more efficient overlooking and checking of the household matters." This was proposed by the Reverend W. W. Wingfield, who "hoped he should not be considered revolutionary in making this suggestion."

CHAPTER V.

1875 — 1906.

In the first four years of the hospital's existence the number of In-patients in the year had risen to ninety-eight, of which sixty-nine were surgical cases, many of them requiring operation. The number of beds after two years had been increased to twelve, and the value of the hospital was being thoroughly recognised throughout the town and district.

At the Annual Meeting in 1880, Mr. T. S. Bolitho with his two brothers, Mr. Edward and Mr. William Bolitho, announced that they were giving what he described as "a little Donation," of £1,000 which they stipulated was to be applied only to "building or improvement" of the hospital, and not to the ordinary running expenses, and, consequently, this very handsome donation was forthwith made the nucleus of a Building Fund.

At this moment it happened that the Committee were looking out for, and considering the purchase of another site for a new hospital, but, failing to find a suitable one, they now abandoned this idea, and before the year was out they had purchased the freehold of the existing hospital of Mr. T. S. Bolitho for £475.

In 1881, Mr. R. Hosking, the "Attendant Surgeon," finding the work too much, relinquished the post and Mr. H. Grenfell was appointed in his place.

In 1881 and 1882 the number of In-patients for the year amounted to 114, of which ninety-two were surgical cases. But it was not until the end of this time (Annual Meeting 1883), that is, nearly ten years since the opening of the hospital, that, in the words of the Annual Report, "these figures have forcibly impressed your Medical Staff with the desirability of providing a suitable operating room, having attached thereto several single-bedded wards, in which cases . . . would be placed until sufficiently convalescent to be removed into the ordinary male or female ward."

With so many operations one wonders nowadays how the surgeons could have managed so long without an operating theatre and its appliances. Already (in the previous November), the Medical Staff had notified the Committee that they "desired to adopt the anti-septic method of performing operations and Dr. Montgomery was empowered to procure the necessary apparatus."

Little time was lost in getting out the plans and starting work on the new "Operating Theatre block," and at the Annual Meeting in January, 1885, it was reported that the new operating room et cetera was "virtually finished."

The cost of this block had been £464 including furnishing. The operating table which "the Medical Officers" had been "requested to procure from London," had cost £5 15s.—a contrast indeed with our present-day operating tables costing at least twenty times that amount!

At the same Meeting the Committee considered having "an additional nurse resident in the Infirmary, under the control of the matron, available for nursing in out-door cases when required amongst the poor, and when . . . shall be certified as wanted by the medical men of the town."

By this time the number of beds had risen to fourteen, and the In-patients for the year had been 116, and now it was proposed to increase the accommodation of the hospital by reconstructing the East Wing at an estimated cost of £1,200.

Work on this began in 1886 and continued through part of the Jubilee Year of 1887, and at the Annual Meeting in January 1888 it was reported that "the event of the year (1887) has been the completion and informal opening of the new Wing, the cost of erecting and furnishing which amounts to £1,383."

In the same year (1887) Mr. Grenfell, the "Attendant Surgeon," died, and Dr. John Symons, who had been one of the Honorary Surgeons since 1880, was appointed, by a vote of the Committee, to take his place. At the Annual Meeting of 1888 it is solemnly recorded that Prebendary Hedgeland stated "that they had in Mr. Symons a very efficient and able successor to the late Mr. Grenfell. Mr. Symons had been very kind and attentive, and he, the Vicar, had reason to know that the patients greatly value his services."

In the light of this statement of nearly 60 years ago it is interesting now, in 1945, to record that Dr. Symons continued to act as the sole surgeon and perform prodigies of valuable work at the Hospital, for the next twenty years. Soon after the new Medical Staff arrangements came into force in 1907 he became Consulting Surgeon and retired from active work on the Staff, but still retained his close interest in the work of the Hospital up to the time of his death in 1944, and in 1940 the Committee commemorated his great services to the Hospital by endowing a bed in his name.

At the Annual Meeting of January 1889 it was reported that the number of In-patients for the year had been 116, Out-patients 1,575, and the number of beds was now sixteen.

At this Meeting Dr. Hugh Montgomerie was appointed to the Medical Staff as Assistant Physician.

The Matron was authorised to engage a Probationer Nurse—the first for the Hospital.

In March 1890 came the resignation of the then Matron, Miss Merrett, and the appointment of Miss Whittaker as her successor—an appointment which she held for twenty-eight years.

In January 1892 Dr. J. B. Montgomery resigned the post of Physician, which he had filled for just forty years, and became Consulting Physician. Dr. Hugh Montgomerie was thereupon appointed Physician.

In the following year (1893) Mr. C. C. Ross resigned from the Secretaryship after filling that post very ably and energetically for several years.

Mr. J. B. Cornish was appointed as his successor—an appointment which, as will soon appear, proved to be of the greatest importance in the annals of the Hospital. It was very largely to his ability and foresight, his 'drive' and indefatigable labours, that we owe our present Hospital.

During this year (1893) the Edward Bolitho Convalescent Home erected and endowed by Mr. T. B. Bolitho in memory of his father, was completed and "privately opened." During the next year the management of the Home was handed over to the Hospital Committee.

In 1895 (Annual Meeting) Dr. H. Montgomerie drew "attention to the uncomfortable arrangements for the Nursing Staff of the Hospital. They had at present a Matron, a nurse and a probationer, and when they had a severe case, one of these had to sit up all night," he said, but owing to the noisiness of the bedrooms, it was impossible for her to get her sleep during the day.

As a result of this statement arrangements were at once started to build a Nurses' Wing, and by November 1895 four bedrooms in the new completed Wing were ready and furnished.

In December the Matron was authorised to advertise for a Night Nurse and a second Probationer.

At the Annual Meeting of 1896 the Secretary made the following interesting statement:—

No. of In-patients in the year	1892	' was	105.
" " " " "	1893	"	109.
" " " " "	1894	"	130.
" " " " "	1895	"	140.

He pointed out that "the total number that could be accommodated in any one year is 166, which total is now nearly reached. So that in less than three years additional accommodation will be needed." And, he continued, the number of Out-patients for the year had been "1831, which equalled the average yearly total of the past six years. Night duty had required the appointment of an extra nurse, and the new Nurses' Wing had cost £635."

And, finally, he gave the following interesting figures comparing the number of In-patients in 1874, when the Infirmary was opened, with that of the year just completed (1895):—

	1874	1895
In-patients	63	140
Cost per head	£4 6s. 8d.	£4 16s. 0d.

At this Meeting Mr. W. Badgery was appointed as Dental Surgeon to the Hospital—the first such appointment to be made—and shortly afterwards the first "Gas apparatus" for the Hospital was ordered.

In 1897 the Honorary Secretary reported that "the patients now have the benefit of a complete staff of excellent trained nurses."

In 1900 Mr. W. E. Baily of "Lynwood," Mousehole, was thanked by the Committee for lending the use of his X-ray apparatus (the first such apparatus in this district), for the Hospital when required.

In July 1901 leave was granted to the Matron to go to London to take part in the presentation of nurses to Her Majesty Queen Alexandra.

At the Annual Meeting 1902 the Treasurer reported the receipt of "£16—the moiety of the old Cholera Fund—a Fund collected to relieve cholera distress 35 years ago and placed in the hands of the Vicar and Churchwardens of St. Mary's." And Dr. Hugh Montgomerie reported that of the In-patients, "only one grumbler for the year was a French sailor, who couldn't help his temper, and carried home a great-coat, not his own."

It was also stated at this Meeting "that private patients pay two guineas, each with a separate room, and ordinary private patients one guinea and a half"

At the Annual Meeting, 1903, it was announced that Dr. J. B. Montgomery was this year completing his fifty years' connection with the Dispensary and Infirmary.

There had been 115 In-patients during the year, of which seventy-five were surgical cases, and the number of operations had been twenty-eight.

The Honorary Secretary now made the significant statement that twice during the past five years the limit-number of In-patients, alluded to by him in 1895, had been exceeded, viz:—176 in 1899 and 165 in 1900, and "under these circumstances he now considered that they would be justified in seriously approaching the question of re-building the West Wing, the estimated cost of which would be £1,350.

Consequently, during this year (1903) they were much occupied with the serious and continuous consideration of this matter and of the alternative scheme of building an entirely new hospital either on the same or another site. Efforts to find another suitable site were made but failed.

Finally, at the Annual Meeting of 1904, comes the momentous statement that the Committee "recommend the building of an entirely new hospital on the present site if the necessary funds can be obtained. . . . The estimated cost of this building is about £8,000."

So the die was cast! And Mr. J. B. Cornish's project was being accepted at long last after nearly ten years of warning and exhortation.

To the casual reader of the long series of Annual Reports and Minutes of Committee Meetings this decision to build an entirely new hospital seems to come with unexpected suddenness. But in reality it was not so. For strong evidence of collusion appears to the reader long before reaching the end of this Annual Report, and in this wise:—

Donations to the Building Fund, generous to a degree and obviously pre-arranged, were at once announced to the Meeting.—£2,000 from Mr. T. B. Bolitho, £500 each from Mr. T. R. Bolitho and Mr. E. Hain, M.P., and a letter from Mr. R. F. Bolitho saying that he is "prepared to contribute £2,000 under certain conditions." One of his conditions (which was undoubtedly inspired by his own doctor!) was that "with all due respect to the present medical staff, members of the medical profession generally, at present practising in the town, should be called on to take their respective share of the Hospital work on the completion of the Hospital."

And so, in a few minutes—minutes teeming with possibilities for the future—history was made in the annals of the Hospital, and, even before the Meeting broke up, the Committee were assured of £5,000 out of the £8,000 required for the cost of the new building.

With such magnificent and generous encouragement little time was lost in getting out plans and starting on the new building, and at the next Annual Meeting (1905) the contractors, Messrs. Perkins & Caldwell, were able to report some progress and that "the foundations of the new West Wing are being laid."

The Committee also reported, "that they have taken into consideration the wish expressed by Mr. R. F. Bolitho," as to the new medical staff. "They have submitted the question to the West Penwith Medical Society and that body prepared a scheme which after full consideration

Society, complying with Mr. R. F. Bolitho's wish, and being one which will be found practicable and efficient in working." The scheme, "will not, of course, come into operation until the completion of the new building."

By this scheme the privilege of serving on the Medical Staff, instead of being arbitrarily limited to one or two doctors selected by the lay Committee, was now extended to all the doctors residing and practising in the Borough of Penzance, if they so desired and their application was approved.

The scheme has now (1945) been in operation for nearly forty years and has never ceased to prove its value and efficiency during the whole of that time, in which, *inter alia*, it has had to grapple with the greatly increased work occasioned by two World Wars.

CHAPTER VI.

1906 — 1908.

Work on the new Building proceeded steadily throughout 1905 and at the Annual Meeting in January 1906 the Honorary Secretary reported that, "the work of the new building has been carried on vigorously during the year. . . . The parts now finished and ready for occupation are the administrative block and the men's ward, and the connected private wards on the west . . . are rapidly nearing completion. . . . The new premises . . . are in every way a credit and advantage to the whole neighbourhood. It is intended to move into the part of the new premises now ready at once, making such temporary accommodation for the women and private patients in some of the rooms as may be practicable, so that the builders may without delay take down the old premises and build the new women's ward and complete the Hospital. It is hoped that everything will be finished and the Committee may be able to organise a formal opening by, if not before, the date of the next Annual Meeting. Recognising the extreme importance of the operating room in a general hospital, the Committee, acting on the advice of the medical staff, have provided furniture for that part of the new premises of the most perfect and modern character. This has entailed a large expenditure of nearly £90, and they hope that the subscribers will approve and agree with them that in such a matter a too great regard for economy would be false inasmuch as it might be actually dangerous."

At this same Meeting Mr. Julyan relinquished the post of Dispenser, and Mr. H. Tonkin was appointed in his place. He continued in office for thirty years.

In February of this year (1906) the new Dispensary premises began to be used for the Out-patients.

And then, at length, on January 16th, 1907, came the formal Opening of the new Infirmary.

The ceremony of unlocking the main entrance door with a special silver key was performed by Miss Mary Bolitho of Trewidden who then declared the building open. This ceremony took place in the presence of the Mayor and Corporation, Borough Officials and Magistrates, the Bishop, (Dr. Stubbs), and a large concourse of people of the town and district.

At the Annual Meeting, which preceded the Opening Ceremony, Mr. J. B. Cornish, the Honorary Secretary, had reported to the Committee, "the completion of the new buildings which they believe . . . form as good a hospital as can be found, and one which is a credit to the county and a legitimate source of pride to everyone connected with it . . . The new arrangements in connection with the medical staff come into operation to-morrow, and it is hoped that the scheme adopted for enabling the Institution to avail itself of the services of all the members of the staff will be found to work smoothly and for the welfare of the patients."

He then made a graceful acknowledgement. "of the enormous debt

Montgomery, Dr. H. Montgomerie and Mr. J. Symons for their unwearied attention and care . . . for so many years," on which the previous success of the Hospital had largely depended.

The Report continued that:—

"The new premises . . . comprise a central block of two storeys . . . known as the administrative block, and a ward block on each side with various rooms attached." The number of beds in each ward was twelve, and the number of private single-bedded rooms was four, making a total of twenty-eight beds in all. "Provision has been made throughout for any prospective extension of the Hospital, should this become necessary, by the addition of another storey." The total cost of the building, "up to the present time amounted to . . . £8,518 . . . total receipts were £6,540. . . This left a deficit . . . in round figures of £2,000," still to be raised.

A letter from Mr. T. B. Bolitho was read expressing his good wishes for the new hospital and enclosing £100 for "furnishing the operating theatre with the latest improvements."

And so, in 1907 the new Hospital started off with its new Medical staff in charge of the work.

Hitherto it had been the custom for the surgeon to supply his own instruments, and so now, on taking office, the new Medical Staff were at once faced with the difficulty of the Hospital possessing no instruments to work with!

Two of the medical Staff were forthwith deputed to make an inventory of such few instruments as the Hospital possessed, and the Staff then submitted to the Committee a list of the instruments they required.

But, in the view of its new Medical Staff, the Hospital's most immediate and outstanding need was that of a Steriliser for dressings. That it did not possess one seems to us incredible in these days of Aseptic operations, and especially abdominal operations. But it should be remembered that it was not long since King Edward's appendix operation had focussed the attention of the public on this subject and laid the foundation of that era of abdominal surgery now so far advanced and so triumphantly successful.

No time was lost by the Medical Staff and in June they "Request the Committee to purchase a Steriliser . . . price £35, considering that it is an essential part of the equipment of any modern up-to-date hospital."

To this the Committee "resolved that the same be deferred until the Institution is in a better financial position."

Fortunately for all concerned, Mr. R. F. Bolitho was not in agreement with this, and a month later the Committee received a letter from him enclosing a cheque for £30 to cover the cost of a Steriliser.

The whole outfit was promptly obtained at a total cost of £44.

In July, 1907, it was decided to form a House-committee.

In September and the ensuing months, in addition to surgical instruments, came requisitions for many articles of every-day use in a hospital, e.g., "Wooden blocks for raising beds for surgical purposes, also two pulley-stands for extensions . . . three round and three kidney-shaped bowls for theatre . . . weights with rings," for extension, four-hour charts, etc., etc., all of which the Hospital apparently had not hitherto possessed.

At the Annual Meeting of 1908 it was reported that there had been 165 In-patients during the year, that the Nursing Staff now consisted of the Matron, two trained Sisters and four Probationers and that two Private Wards were still unfurnished.

The resignation of Mr. Julyan as Treasurer, after many years service was announced, and Mr. P. Chirgwin was appointed as his successor.

The death of Dr. Hugh Montgomerie took place in December 1908 and was a great loss to the Hospital.

CHAPTER VII.

1909 — 1919.

1909—The Centenary Year of the Dispensary and Infirmary.

At the One-hundredth Annual Meeting, held in January, it was reported that the number of In-patients for the past year had been 224, a figure far in excess of anything previously recorded, and the total of Out-patients was 2,032, the second highest since the record number of 2,171 in 1899.

Mr. Barnett, the Mayor, in the Chair, gave a brief outline of the history and progress of the Institution and then referred to the loss of the Hospital in the recent death of Dr. Hugh Montgomerie. He pointed out that as his grandfather Dr. James Montgomery had been appointed Physician in 1825 and was later succeeded by Dr. Barclay Montgomery (Dr. Hugh's father), the three generations had acted as Physician to the Hospital for a continuous and unbroken period of more than eighty years, which was probably a record.

The Meeting decided to honour the memory of Dr. Hugh Montgomerie and his family by dedicating a bed in his name, and later on (in June), the Lord Mayor of London, who was paying an official visit to Cornwall, kindly came to perform the ceremony of dedication and afterwards received purses towards the Endowment Fund of the bed.

By this time it was being realised that the Hospital was in urgent need of possessing an X-ray apparatus—a need in which the energetic Treasurer, Mr. P. Chirgwin, greatly interested himself, and in August he reported that, "he had received £40, the proceeds of a Bazaar arranged by sixteen children, towards the cost of a Roentgen Ray apparatus, and that an additional £40 would be required."

In due time the money was raised, and in January 1911 it was reported that the X-ray apparatus had been obtained and had been "installed in one of the Private Wards for the present," and at the Annual Meeting in February, 1911, a vote of thanks was recorded "to the children who have raised the money for the X-ray apparatus."

At this same Meeting it was proposed and agreed "that three ladies be elected to the Committee," and the first three to be so elected were Mrs. J. H. Bennetts, Mrs. W. E. T. Bolitho and Mrs. W. H. Borlase.

In March of this year (1911) the telephone was installed in the Hospital. In June 1911, on the occasion of the Coronation of King George V, and to mark the event, Mr. R. F. Bolitho gave a Donation of £1,500 to be devoted to the endowment of a Bed to the memory of the late Mr. Oliver Caldwell, who had been the architect of the Hospital.

At the Annual Meeting of January 1912, the figures of In-patients for the past five years showed a steady increase as follows:—

Year	No. of In-patients			
1907	165
1908	224
1909	225
1910	257

It was at this time that Members of Parliament began to receive a 'salary' of £400 a year for their services, and in March 1912 Sir Clifford Cory, M.P. for the St. Ives Division, gave his first £400 'salary' as a donation to the Hospital, and followed it up in the next year by giving half of it (£200) of which he ear-marked £100 to be handed to the Medical Staff to purchase any Instruments the Hospital might require.

In January 1913, the National Insurance Act came into force and the Committee, who had had the subject under consideration for some time previously, now put into operation "a Scale of Charges for In-patients under National Insurance Act or Workmen's Compensation Acts."

At the Annual Meeting in this year (1913) the Medical Staff made strong representations to the Committee of the need for increasing the Nursing Staff on account of the increase of patients and operations, and this resulted in the appointment of a Theatre Sister for the first time.

At the next Annual Meeting (1914) they made strong representations on the following subjects:—

1. The imperfect and unhealthy method of heating the Operating Theatre; and
2. The need for working the X-ray apparatus off the Electric Supply, instead of Batteries, which gave insufficient power (only fifty volts!) to get radiographs of the deeper parts of the body.

As the result of these representations the necessary steps were taken at a cost of about £80, and in March of this year Sir C. Cory again very generously sent a cheque to cover this cost and also to pay off the deficit of the Hospital of the previous year, a sum of about £350 in all, and being in addition to the £1,000 he had already given as donations during the past three years.

March 1914.—By now the First World War was threatening and the Local Red Cross Society asked if one or two of their members might be allowed to assist in the dressing of Out-patients for the purpose of obtaining some training. To this the Committee readily agreed.

At the same Meeting it was "Resolved that two Oxygen Cylinders be kept in the Infirmary ready for use."

August 1914.—Outbreak of War. "Arrangements made for extra accommodation in case of emergency, including the hiring of ten beds," which were cancelled next month on receipt of a letter from the Red Cross Society presumably stating that the Society was opening up its own (improvised) hospital in Penzance.

At the Annual Meeting, January, 1915, it was reported that on the outbreak of War, "in August 1914, the Committee had informed the War Office of their readiness to place sixteen beds at the service of the Red Cross Authorities for reception of the wounded, and had received reply gratefully acknowledging the offer, but mentioning that there was no intention of making use of the accommodation."

The above statement is interesting when compared with the steps adopted by the Authorities on the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. And, in spite of this statement, by February 1915, the R.A.M.C. authorities at Falmouth wrote to know whether this hospital could accept cases sent in by the Military Authorities. At the same time the Red Cross

Society applied and received permission for their nurses to acquire Elementary Training in the wards; while, in September, the Naval Authorities requested and received permission to have six beds placed at their disposal.

For some time now the Committee had been considering the purchase of some of the land on the south side of the Hospital, and now at this same Annual Meeting (1915) came a letter from Mr. T. R. Bolitho stating that he and Mr. T. B. Bolitho were making a joint present of one acre of this land to the Hospital in memory of Prebendary Hedgeland, who had recently died and for fifty-four years had been a member of the Committee and a very strong supporter of the Hospital.

At the Annual Meeting, January, 1916, the number of In-patients for the preceding year was reported as 336, which was fifty more than the highest previously recorded and even more than the original estimated capacity. This, of course, had entailed much extra work on the Nursing and Medical Staffs, and the latter had been temporarily depleted by the absence on military service of one of its members, Dr. W. R. Wilson.

During the year (1915) Mr. T. B. Bolitho, one of the Hospital's greatest and most generous benefactors, had died. He had left the Hospital a legacy of £1,000 which the Committee now resolved to set aside as the nucleus of a fund for building a Children's Ward in his memory—an addition which was becoming more needful year by year.

Up to this period of the War, "black-out" precautions had not been enforced except for houses on the sea-front, and now, in September 1916 the Committee gave orders "to have blinds fixed to the windows of the Infirmary if the lights should be complained of in future." The windows of the Operating Theatre were obscured by putting up outside wooden shutters, an arrangement which was awkward and a particularly unpleasant job for the nurses on a cold wet night!

Year by year the expenses of the Hospital exceeded the receipts, and year by year Sir Clifford Cory with great regularity promptly and generously provided a cheque to cover the deficit. In this way, from the years 1915 to 1918 inclusive, he sent amounts totalling about £676 in all, to the great relief of the Committee.

In March 1917 Cornwall Voluntary Aid Association enquired whether the Hospital could provide additional accommodation for Army Sick and Wounded, and the Committee, with regret, had to reply in the negative stating that all spare space was pledged to the Admiralty.

In April 1917 Mr. R. F. Bolitho gave £1,500 to endow a bed in memory of his sister, Miss Sage Bolitho, who had recently died and had been a strong supporter of the Hospital.

In January 1918 the Matron, Miss Whittaker, announced her resignation after twenty-eight years of very faithful and fruitful service. It was pointed out by the Honorary Secretary that when she was appointed in 1874 she had one nurse only to assist her, and that the number of In-patients for the year amounted to a hundred, while now (in 1918) we had a Matron and seven nurses with 391 In-patients in the year.

Later in this same month (January 1918) occurred the tragic death

so much to his energy and efficiency during the past ten years. It had been largely owing to him that the money was raised to purchase the first X-ray apparatus for the Hospital. At the time of his death he had been particularly interested in the project of building a Children's Ward, and it was now decided to make a new effort to raise the £4,000 required for this purpose, in his memory. In his place Mr. Richard Quick now became Treasurer and filled the post very ably for the next six years.

In May 1918 the new Matron, Miss Lapham, came into office.

In November came the Armistice and the end of the War. The work of the Hospital occasioned by those four years of War had been decidedly strenuous and bespoke a notable effort on the part of all concerned, particularly so, owing to the want of the thorough pre-vision and preliminary organisation which characterised the Hospital arrangements at the outset of the Second World War.

The total number of beds in the two wards was twenty-four, and with the five Private Ward beds in addition, the total nominal accommodation was twenty-nine beds. During the War there were often more than thirty patients in at one time and the average throughout was twenty-seven. Things were carried on by continual improvisation, as the wounded and injured men were brought in often unexpectedly and at any hour of the day or night. Extra beds were crowded into the men's ward, and for a whole year the Board Room was used as an extra ward, the patients at first being laid on mattresses on the floor until extra bedsteads could be obtained. Sometimes the men had to be laid on mattresses on the floor of the corridors for a time, as for example, when twenty or more injured survivors of crews of two or three torpedoed vessels were brought in unexpectedly in one night. This happened on more than one occasion, and all the members of the Medical Staff were roused from their beds to come and lend a hand at once.

As many of the patients brought in in this way were survivors of foreign ships, there were added difficulties of language, and interpreters were sought for and proved invaluable. The patients were Italians, French, Spanish, Greeks, Portuguese, Dutch, Indian Coolies and Arab stokers, often quite unintelligible in speech, and picturesque in costume.

There were also a large number of men from H.M. Navy, and as soon as possible they were transferred to Naval hospitals at Truro and Stonehouse to keep our Hospital decks clear to receive more. Sometimes this proved a difficult task, especially in 1917—8 at the height of the ruthless U-boat attack which was specially concentrated on the Land's End area.

The pressure on the endurance of the Nursing Staff was particularly heavy during these years, and full use was made of the Red Cross and V.A.D. nurses as auxiliaries to the regular Nursing Staff.

In spite of this there were occasions when, owing to the shortage of nurses during the night, patients, delirious with pneumonia, were found wandering down the corridors and had to be persuaded or dragged back to their beds. And on one occasion an Italian was seen chasing a fellow-countryman round the garden with a knife!

The following are the figures showing the number of War-patients

Year	Total No. of War-patients.	Total of patients in Hospital.
1914	5	254
1915	45	336
1916	33	325
1917	118	391
1918	121	376
1919	33	383
	<hr/> 355	<hr/> 2065

The figures of the War-patients are made up as follows:—

Year	Wounded, injured and sick from R.N., R.N.A.S. and Army.	Injured in Sub-marine and Torpedo attacks.	Belgian Refugees.	Total.
1914	3	0	2	5
1915	34	11	0	45
1916	32	1	0	33
1917	81	36	1	118
1918	91	27	3	121
1919	33	0	0	33
				<hr/> 355

From the above it will be seen that the War-patients in the whole six years reached a total of 355, a number which equals and slightly exceeds the average number (344) of In-patients treated in any one of those same six years; and in the years 1917 and 1918 the number of War-patients amounted to almost one-third of the total of In-patients treated in each of those two years.

CHAPTER VIII.

1919 — 1939.

The War had demonstrated to the public the immense amount of work that a small hospital of twenty-nine beds could accomplish, and emphasised more than ever the need for increasing the accommodation in the Hospital. This in itself became an incentive to the Committee to turn once more to the project of building the much-needed Children's Ward.

It was decided to regard this extension of the Hospital as a Peace Memorial, and efforts were at once initiated to raise the necessary funds. The cost of building, furnishing and maintenance was estimated at £12,000 of which £4,000 were already in hand, and a grant was confidently expected to be forthcoming from another quarter.

For, after the War, the surplus funds of the Red Cross and St. John's H.Q. Fund were to be distributed among the hospitals of the whole country in proportion to the share that each had contributed to the War work.

Penzance Hospital had had a larger share of work than any of the other three hospitals in Cornwall, (Truro, Redruth and Falmouth), and, judging from the amounts received by those hospitals Penzance should have had a grant of from £2,000 to £3,000 at least.

But, unfortunately, owing to an oversight, Penzance Hospital's application arrived too late—by then the surplus had all been distributed, and the Hospital received—not a penny!

This failure to obtain the Red Cross grant was most unfortunate, to say the least, and delayed the project of building the Children's Ward for several years.

One immediate and useful result of the War was the offer to the Hospital, by the County Red Cross authorities, of a Motor Ambulance, on their demobilisation. The offer was gratefully accepted. Penzance formed its Ambulance Division who at once proved their value and usefulness, and at the end of six months they were formally thanked by the Committee for their good work in transporting patients and their help in the Hospital.

In September of this year (1919) we read of the appointment of the first Staff Nurse to be appointed from the nurses trained in the Hospital, and in April 1920 is a note that Nurse Ralph, our present Matron, "be appointed Staff Nurse on the expiration of her training on May 31st."

In 1922 the sum of £300 was spent on X-ray and Radiography equipment for the special room provided by her family to the memory of the late Miss Bedford, who had been one of the first lady "Visitors" to be appointed by the Committee in 1870.

At the Annual Meeting, 1925, the Honorary Secretary reported the number of In-patients for the preceding year had been 526, the number of operations 606, of which 558 had been performed in the Theatre, and the number of X-ray patients treated was 1,057. The average number of patients

All this proved the need for enlarging the Hospital and increasing the accommodation as soon as possible.

Meanwhile funds for building the Children's Ward continued to accumulate, and by this time amounted to £8,000. Plans as approved by the expert Hospital architects, Messrs. Pite and Fairweather of London, were adopted, and in January 1926 the Foundation Stone of the new building was laid by the President, Mrs. W. E. T. Bolitho. It was then announced that another £5,000 was needed to complete the work.

In May of this year (1926) the Hospital suffered a severe loss in the death of Mr. J. B. Cornish who had been Honorary Secretary for thirty-three years. He had taken office in 1893, more than ten years before the building of the older portion of the present Hospital. He had been largely instrumental in initiating it and had watched and nurtured it in its infancy with the greatest pride and care. In the Children's Ward project he took the greatest interest but, unfortunately, did not survive to see the completion of it.

In August 1926 the building fund had risen to £12,197 received and promised, and on April 29th, 1927, the new Children's Wing was formally opened by the President, Mrs. W. E. T. Bolitho, and Lord St. Levan.

The new Wing comprised a Children's Ward of twelve beds together with four Private Wards on the ground floor; and, on the floor above, provided a Rest Room and the much-needed sleeping accommodation for nurses. The building programme also included a new Sterilising Room and improvements in the Operating Theatre.

Altogether it increased the number of beds from twenty-nine to forty-five.

In 1929 the Hospital was re-named and styled:—

THE WEST CORNWALL HOSPITAL.

In the same year land was bought on the west side of the Hospital for the purpose of erecting a Nurses' Hostel detached from the main building, and in 1930 the Foundation Stone of the Hostel was laid by H.R.H. Princess Helena Victoria.

Mr. R. F. Bolitho generously gave £500 towards the cost of the building, and in November 1931 the official Opening Ceremony took place.

The Hostel provided twenty bedrooms, a large Recreation or Rest Room, and was connected with the Hospital by a covered way. In 1936 it was enlarged and now accommodates thirty-four nurses.

In 1931 came the very generous gift of £5,000 from Mr. R. A. Courtney in memory of his niece, Miss S. C. Julyan, whose father had in former years been Dispenser and Honorary Treasurer for a considerable time.

At the wish of the donor, this gift was "to be used not for endowment but for necessitous requirements in the immediate future." Accordingly in compliance with this wish the Committee at once undertook the following alterations and additions:—

1. The building of a new and spacious X-ray Room, with Developing Room, Dressing Cubicles and other auxiliary offices.
2. The installation in this room of the most modern X-ray apparatus obtainable and at that time the only one of its kind in the West of England. The cost of the apparatus was £5,500.

3. The purchase, in addition to this apparatus, of an equally modern portable or mobile X-ray apparatus—a valuable addition seeing that it can be wheeled into the wards for use and avoids moving the patient from his bed. The cost of this apparatus was £500.
4. Structural alterations which increased the number of Private Wards and brought up the number of beds available for In-patients from twenty-nine to fifty. And lastly,
5. The construction of a new Theatre Unit which brought the Theatre fully up to modern requirements and comprised a new Sterilising Room and a Second (or Auxiliary) Theatre.

The formal Opening of the new X-ray Room and X-ray Unit and Apparatus was performed by Mr. Courtney in June 1933.

In 1934 the usefulness of the Hospital was further increased by the opening of the Ophthalmic Department under the care of Dr. East and Dr. Owen as the Ophthalmic Surgeons.

During 1934 and 1935 the work of the Hospital constantly increased and the number of In-patients continually exceeded the accommodation of the wards particularly on the men's side; a source of constant anxiety to the Committee. Thus in the Annual Report for 1935 it was stated that in the Men's Ward, intended to accommodate twelve, there were sometimes as many as nineteen patients at one time.

The figures stated were as follows:—

Year	1934	1935
No. of In-patients ...	867	915
Average daily number of beds occupied ...	52.61	57.16
No. of operations ...	532	494 (In-patients)
...	680	665 (Out-patients)
	<hr/> 1212	<hr/> 1159

The Report also reminded the Subscribers that the Hospital had been, "opened in January, 1907, and for that year the In-patients numbered 165, compared with 915 last year (1935). 115 operations were performed compared with 1,159 last year. Then there was no X-ray apparatus. In 1935 the average daily number of beds occupied was 57.16—that is 2.56 more than the previous highest number of four years ago."

From the above Report it was manifestly obvious that the fifty beds which the Hospital provided were quite insufficient to meet the ever-increasing demands on the Institution, and at the Annual Meeting held in March 1937 the Committee announced their resolution to carry out a "Comprehensive Scheme" which was estimated to cost about £26,000. It included:—

1. Extension of the Men's and Women's wards to add twelve beds to each.
2. More accommodation for private patients, who, in the words of the Report, "pay their cost and are in themselves advertising media among the type of people who may require similar treatment."
3. Central Heating for the whole of the buildings.
4. A Stretcher Lift, and
5. Fire Escape facilities.

Plans were adopted and a Special Appeal for the necessary funds was launched, inaugurated by a B.B.C. broadcast appeal undertaken by the Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman.

In the course of a year about £8,000 had been raised, and in 1938 tenders were received, the contract signed, and building was started.

And not a moment too soon!

For although the Committee had stated that, "it is hoped that the extensions will be completed by the end of October 1939," it was a good month before that date that the War clouds, which for some time had been looming so ominously, now suddenly burst on us, and caught the Hospital extension in an unfinished state. However, the work had proceeded very well during the earlier part of the year, which was fortunate, for now, under War-conditions, difficulties at once arose in connection with supplies of building materials and caused serious delays. Yet, in spite of this setback, the Committee were glad to be able to report the completion of the extensions during the following year, 1940.

For a considerable length of time prior to the outbreak of War the Ministry of Health had been making very exhaustive surveys of the Hospital accommodation throughout the country, and had decided several months before, that, if War came, this Hospital would have to accommodate 104 additional patients if necessary. By the month of August, 1939, the situation had become acute and the Committee found it necessary to make immediate arrangements for this additional accommodation to be ready. Consequently, as the new ward extensions were at this moment only partly completed, it now became necessary to put in temporary floors, and instal gas, electric lighting, water, and sanitary accommodation, and it was with pardonable gratification that the Committee were able to report that "within a very few days of the instructions being given by the Ministry of Health the wards were ready for immediate emergency occupation."

CHAPTER IX.

The Annual Report for 1935 referred to the greatly increased number of operations then being performed in the Hospital as compared with the figures of its earlier years. It made no reference to the nature of the operations, many of which come under the category classified by surgeons as Major Operations and require for their performance a high standard of surgical skill and knowledge. These Major Operations were all undertaken and performed by the regular Surgical Staff of the Hospital and not by Specialist Surgeons imported for that purpose.

The following tables of figures should be of interest, more especially to the Surgical Staff. They are compiled from the In-patient Operation Records for the years 1931—1940, and show:—

1. The total number of In-patient operations performed in each of those ten years.
2. The number of Major Operations performed in each year; and
3. The nature of the Major Operations performed, with the number in each, for the same years.

1. In-patient Operations:—

Year						Number of Operations.
1931	...	...	...	...	...	538
1932	...	...	...	...	...	504
1933	...	...	...	...	...	532
1934	...	...	...	...	...	532
1935	...	...	...	...	...	494
1936	...	...	...	...	...	496
1937	...	...	...	...	...	480
1938	...	...	...	...	...	493
1939	...	...	...	...	...	365
1940	...	...	...	...	...	511
						<hr/> 4945

2. Major Operations (Included in above).

Year						Number of Major Operations.
1931	...	...	...	...	...	259
1932	...	...	...	...	...	299
1933	...	...	...	...	...	210
1934	...	...	...	...	...	215
1935	...	...	...	...	...	263
1936	...	...	...	...	...	240
1937	...	...	...	...	...	200
1938	...	...	...	...	...	237
1939	...	...	...	...	...	148
1940	...	...	...	...	...	199
						<hr/> 2270

3. Major Operations (Nature of)	Total for 1931-5	Total for 1936-40	Total for ten years
Perforated Gastric Ulcer sutured ...	14	25	39
Excision of Gastric Ulcer ...	0	2	2
Gastro-enterostomy (Short-circuit operation) ...	23	27	50
Gastrectomy (Partial excision of stomach) ...	2	3	5
Gastrostomy (for obstruction of oesophagus) ...	2	3	5
Congenital Pyloric Stenosis (Ramsted's operation) ...	2	1	3
Resection of Bowel and anastomosis ...	8	6	14
Intussusception ...	4	1	5
Intestinal Obstruction ...	6	2	8
Enterostomy or Colostomy ...	16	16	32
Excision of Rectum (Abdomino-perineal) ...	1	0	1
Excision of Gall-bladder ...	29	50	79
Anastomosis of Gall-bladder and Duodenum ...	1	1	2
Excision of Kidney ...	2	9	11
Incision of Kidney for removal of stones ...	2	1	3
Fixation of Kidney or incision (exploratory) ...	4	2	6
Excision of Prostate (Suprapubic) ...	17	13	30
Incision of Bladder for removal of stones ...	2	2	4
Incision of Bladder (for exploration, etc.) ...	23	16	39
(Vaginal) ...	4)	3)	7)
Extirpation of Uterus (Subtotal) Hysterectomy ...	24)57	23)46	47)103
(Total) ...	29)	20)	49)
Fixation of Uterus to Abdominal Wall (Hysteropexy) ...	19	19	38
Myomectomy (Excision of fibroid tumour of Uterus) ...	0	2	2
Excision of Ovary (for Ovarian Cysts, etc) ...	43	38	81
Excision of Fallopian Tube (Salpingectomy) ...	10	17	27
Extra-uterine Gestation (Salpingectomy) ...	5	7	12
Caesarean Section ...	53	32	85
Opening of Abdomen (for exploration, etc.) ...	83	57	140
Excision of Appendix (Appendicectomy) ...	689	520	1209
Fractured bones plated or sutured ...	26	25	51
Fractured neck of femur pinned (Petersen pin) ...	0	5	5
Fractured patella bone sutured ...	11	8	19
Semilunar cartilage of knee excised ...	11	7	18
Cervical rib excised ...	2	0	2
Trephining skull ...	4	1	5
Depressed fracture of Skull elevated ...	1	2	3
Trephining skull for Intracranial abscess ...	1	0	1
Cranial Sinuses (Frontal or Sphenoid) drained ...	4	2	6
Ligature of Internal Jugular Vein ...	1	0	1
Amputation of lower limb ...	7	6	13
Thyroidectomy (Excision of Thyroid Gland) ...	3	4	7
Excision of Tongue ...	1	1	2
Mastoid operation ...	32	13	45
Excision of Gasserian Ganglion ...	0	1	1
Total Excision of Breast (for Cancer) ...	26	30	56
Total ...	1247	1023	2270

CHAPTER X.

1939—1945 THE WAR YEARS.

One of the immediate results of the outbreak of War was the loss to the Hospital of the services of no less than four (50%) of its Medical Staff—Drs. Leslie, Godfrey Symons, Porritt and Reid—who left to take up their duties with H.M. Forces.

This, of course, threw a heavy burden on the shoulders of those who remained behind, both in their Hospital and their private practice work, both of which were soon to be augmented considerably by the arrival in the Borough and district of large numbers of Evacuees from London and other blitzed areas.

In the work of the Hospital the loss was partly made good by the appointment, in February 1940, of the Hospital's first House-surgeon, Dr. Patrick Esmonde.

To cope with the increased work of the nurses it was found necessary to appoint, about this time, an Assistant Matron and a Night Sister, and the number of nurses increased from twenty-one in 1938 to sixty-six in 1944.

Very shortly after the War started, Mr. K. I. Newell, who for some years had been acting as Assistant Secretary and Almoner, now became Secretary Superintendent, and the post of Almoner was filled by a Trained Lady Almoner, the first such to be appointed to a Voluntary Hospital in Cornwall.

Still another important appointment made at this time was that of a fully qualified Radiographer to take charge of the X-ray apparatus.

Under the exigencies of War the value of the new Ward extensions quickly became apparent, no less than their necessity. Indeed, without them the vast amount of War work done in the Hospital would have been quite impossible. Thanks to the extensions, the number of beds for the use of the ordinary civilian Hospital patients had increased from fifty to eighty-two, and, in addition, the Emergency Medical Service of the Ministry of Health provided another 104 beds for Service patients and such civilians as were injured in bombing attacks, thus making a total of 186 beds available, with, of course, the added responsibility of the Hospital for the corresponding number of In-patients.

The Committee reported that throughout the year 1940, "the Hospital has been extremely busy, the demand for beds having been greater than at any previous time in its history, the number of patients in Hospital having risen on more than one occasion to over a hundred," and as time went on, even these figures were surpassed as the following tables compiled from

	Pre-war	War Years					
	1938	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945 (to Oct. 31)
No. of In-patients ...	945	1397	1685	1926	1642	1939	1855
No. of beds ...	50	186	186	186	204	204	214
No. of beds occupied daily ...	52.3	64.5	86.9	94.3	85.4	91.2	
Out-patients (circ)	1100		9906	13435	14384	20776	

In the above table the totals of In-patients for each year include both the ordinary Hospital patients and the Emergency Medical Service (or E.M.S.) patients.

The following table differentiates between these two categories and shows the number of beds allotted to each.

Year	Ordinary In-patients	Ordinary Beds	E.M.S. In-patients	E.M.S. Beds	Total In-patients	Total Beds
(Pre-War)						
1938 ...	945	50	0	0	945	50
1939 ...	871	50	14	104	885	154
1940 ...	1236	82	161	104	1397	186
1941 ...	1373	82	312	104	1685	186
1942 ...	1474	82	452	104	1926	186
1943 ...	1346	100	296	104	1642	204
1944 ...	1639	100	300	104	1939	204
1945 ...	1642	110	213	104	1855	214
(to Oct. 31)						
	9581		1748		11329	

From these figures it will be seen that the E.M.S. patients for the War years (1939—1945) reached a total of 1,748, which amounts to rather more than one-sixth of the total of In-patients (11,329) for the whole period, and exceeds the average (1,618) of In-patients treated in any one of those same years.

A comparison with the corresponding figures of the First World War years (1914—19) is of interest. In those years, with twenty-nine beds in the Hospital the total of War-patients amounted to one-third of the total of In-patients and also slightly exceeded the average number of In-patients treated in any one of the War years.

In the previous War the twenty-nine beds available in the Hospital accommodated 11.8 patients per bed per annum; in this War, taking the average number of beds available as 190, they accommodated 8.5 patients per bed per annum.

As may be readily understood, the strain imposed on the Hospital Staff and its resources was frequently tested to the utmost by the irregularity of the arrival of E.M.S. patients and, at times, by the numbers in which they came.

For example, on one occasion, after a sea-encounter off the neighbouring coast, as many as forty Naval men arrived at the Hospital, some wounded, some injured, most suffering from shock and immersion, and all requiring detention in hospital for a few days for the purpose of recovery

Then too, on other occasions, men were brought in injured in land-mine explosions, men injured in a mine-sweeping operation in Mount's Bay, and men from Commando troops injured in a practice operation on the North Coast cliffs.

And, on one grim occasion, the number arriving at the Hospital amounted to twenty-two young Naval men—in this case all of them dead—to be placed in the Mortuary awaiting Official enquiry and burial.

As to the nationalities of the E.M.S. patients:—besides British men and women of all the Services, the Hospital provided treatment to Belgian, Dutch, Danish and Norwegian seamen, Filipinos, large numbers of American troops quartered in the town and district, Czech and Polish Pilot officers and Airmen (very difficult to converse with), Belgian Refugees, Italian Prisoners of War, and, on one occasion, an injured German Luftwaffe man brought down with his plane after one of the air-raids on Penzance—a truculent and objectionable patient!

During the War-period an important advance was made by the Hospital in its establishment of a Training School for Nurses with the appointment of a Sister Tutor. For their accommodation a house was rented in the neighbourhood to serve as a Hostel for the Trainees.

Another valuable addition has also recently taken place in the renting of the block of buildings next door to the Hospital, which is in fact the portion of the old Workhouse buildings that the Hospital had failed to acquire when it originally established itself on its present site in 1870, and which was designated at that time as, "the lower plot—the old Prison Premises." Part of this block now rented consisted of four prison cells which still remain intact. The remainder, which up to now had been used as a school-room, is now in process of conversion into rooms for the Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Departments of the Hospital, on the ground floor, while, on the upper floor, will be a Lecture Room and other rooms for the Nurses' Training School and also a small Pathological Laboratory.

Since the beginning of the War the number of Clinics carried on at the Hospital has increased and there are now in being the following:—

Ophthalmic, Medical, Surgical, V.D., and Ear, Nose, and Throat Clinics while, in addition to these, there are the County Clinics—Orthopaedic, Tuberculosis, Ante-natal, and School Clinics.

The increased accommodation in the Hospital and the work it has entailed have necessitated a considerable increase in Staff as the following table shows:—

Year	1938	1944
I. Nursing Staff	21	66
II. Domestic Staff, Porters, etc.	17	34
III. Other Staff	4	11
	42	111

Finally, the expenditure of the Hospital during the War years shows a large and corresponding increase, due not only to the increased number of patients and the higher price of food and dressings, but also to the higher rates of salaries and wages under the newly-adopted Rushcliffe and Hether-

The following tables of Comparative Figures for 1938 and 1944 are of interest, showing as they do the remarkable increase in the number of patients treated and in the Income and Expenditure of the Hospital during that period.

Comparative Figures 1938—1944.

		1938	1944
Number treated in X-ray Department	...	1273	2990
Number of Patients admitted	...	945	1939
Number of Treatments in Physiotherapy Department	...	1548	5875
Number of Out-patient Attendances (circ)	...	1100	20776

Comparative Income and Expenditure 1938 and 1944

INCOME		1938			1944		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Voluntary Gifts	...	1382	0	1	1790	17	11
Services rendered	...	6051	19	6	17359	17	9
Other receipts	...	39	16	7	385	5	1
Investment Income	...	1664	14	4	800	10	8

EXPENDITURE		1938			1944		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Provisions	...	2070	5	4	4235	14	3
Surgery and Dispensary	...	1585	13	1	1844	8	11
Domestic (Repairs and Renewals)	...	1792	9	10	3305	6	4
Salaries and Wages	...	2965	18	9	12862	15	10
Miscellaneous	...	330	1	11	1205	6	0
Administrative	...	363	3	8	1055	13	4
Establishment (Repairs and Renewals)	...	55	16	0	208	4	6
Finance	...	81	11	9	102	14	3

CHAPTER XI.

1945.

And now, at the moment of writing, three months after the end of the War, the good work of the Hospital goes steadily on and provides a notable example of what is daily being accomplished in Voluntary Hospitals, great or small, all over the country, and accomplished through the sheer hard work, the efficiency, and the devotion to duty of their Medical and Nursing Staffs—good team work, in fact, and everyone “playing the game.”

Nevertheless there are warnings and much talk at the present time of the intention of the Government to interfere with the Voluntary Hospitals and to substitute for them State Hospitals in charge of State doctors, a measure which, they say, will produce a better service and be of greater benefit to the public.

Such a measure, if adopted, is regarded by Medical Staffs of Voluntary Hospitals throughout the land as nothing else than a retrograde step and one which is uncalled for in the light of such records of efficient hospital service as is set out above.

It is considered that the State Medical Officers, who would be in charge of such hospitals, would be regimented, “directed” to their appointment, and promoted automatically rather than according to merit. They would be nothing but State officials, a species of Civil Servants, and could not be expected to be imbued with the ambition, the esprit de corps, and the healthy competitive friendly rivalry which inspires the Medical Staffs of Voluntary Hospitals as we know them.

This would certainly not be for the benefit of the public. And, lastly, the public would most certainly lose another considerable benefit if this measure were adopted, inasmuch as it would deprive them of their present liberty and undoubted right to have the doctor of their choice in charge of them at the time of their more serious illnesses.

It is therefore earnestly to be hoped that the Voluntary Hospitals, untrammelled by State interference, may be permitted to continue their good work for the benefit of the public, and with the continuance of their appreciation, their gratitude, and their never-failing and unstinted generosity.

1809 - 1945—very nearly a century and a half since the Founders of the Institution introduced it to the public with these words:—

“To remove, or to mitigate the sufferings of the poor in seasons of sickness, is one of the first duties and noblest offices of charity.”

And, to this, we of the present-day establishment would now add:—

“Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
And what we have been makes us what we are.”