

The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto

CHAPTER I.

The Hospital for Sick Children was founded by Mrs. Samuel F. McMaster, with the help of Miss Knapp and other earnest Christian women of Toronto.

The pioneer hospital for children in the Dominion, it stands second to none to-day.

On the first day of March in the year 1875 the first building was rented for \$320.00 per annum, and on the 23rd of the same month it was dedicated to its purpose, and its doors were flung wide open for sick children of every creed and color.

This first establishment was an unpretentious two-storey red brick house of only eleven rooms, with a mansard roof, and a basement. There were no grounds, other than a small back yard. It was situated at 31 Avenue Street, a street which no longer exists, and which ran west off Elizabeth Street, just a few yards south of, and parallel to, where College Street now is. The main building of the Toronto General Hospital covers the identical spot.

It was simply furnished with suitable comforts for sick children. A matron, nurse and servant were engaged; while leading physicians and surgeons gave their capable services willingly, and gratuitously, to those unable to pay. Two stoves and six little iron cots were put up, the cots having sliding trays so that the child could have within easy reach his meals, and also his books and toys, and thus enliven a little life not overflowing with pleasure.

Many years before the Hospital became a reality, it had been impressed on the minds of these progressive women that a hospital for children only was a real necessity. At this period of history, of 50,000 people dying in Europe, 21,000 were children under ten years of age. This showed the great need of specializing on the diseases of early childhood.

At first the promoters saw no way to found such an institution, but after years of consideration on the subject they resolved at least