

INSIDE THE HOSPITAL.

CHANGES THAT MIGHT LEAD UP TO BETTER RESULTS.

How an Assistant House Surgeon Could be Added—No Need to Pay the Visiting Physicians—Other Suggestions For the Commissioners to Consider.

It has been said, and with apparent reason, that there are too many doctors on the board of hospital commissioners. There are only three, it is true, and one of these is Dr. Bayard, whom nobody would want to see retired, while there are six members who are of the laity. Despite this proportion, however, the doctors can influence the acts of the board to a large extent, and especially in matters relating to hospital practice. They can quote the system of this or that hospital, and the other members will defer to their opinion for the lack of any knowledge of their own in the matter. Thus it is that the medical end of the commission has its own way in matters most to its interest, and there is a different state of affairs from what there would be were there a new board composed of practical business men.

The Montreal General Hospital is a leading institution in Canada, but there is not a doctor on its board, unless one has managed to get there at a very recent date. In the St. John hospital, the doctors hold the balance of power, and it is manifestly to their advantage to maintain the present system, by which the hospital practice is limited to themselves and the half dozen others who compose the staff, while some of the best physicians and surgeons in the city are excluded.

In the last issue of PROGRESS it was shown that the duties and responsibilities imposed upon the house surgeon are too much for one man, and that they are becoming greater each year. The injustice of giving the staff a monopoly of the practice was also pointed out, and the suggestion was made that the visiting staff should exist under wholly new conditions. None of these propositions were advanced without a due inquiry into the subject.

The additions to the house staff, which are actually needed now and must be made sooner or later, are not only an assistant house surgeon, but a head nurse in addition to the matron, at least one more trained nurse, and an extra male nurse to relieve the one man who now has to attend special cases both by night and day.

Money is needed for all this and the cry is that there must be no extra expense. It is probable a sufficiently qualified assistant house surgeon could be had for \$400. It might be understood that the house surgeon would retire after two years of service, as in fact has been the practice, and assistance would be his successor. In former years, the house surgeon did the duties now performed by the clerk to the board, and while PROGRESS would not want to see the present incumbent of the latter office displaced, yet should he resign it might be worth considering whether his salary could not be saved wholly or in part by giving his work to the assistant house surgeon.

Not relying on such a hypothesis, however, the means for paying an assistant house surgeon, and in part providing for the others needed around the house, can be found by the saving of the present unnecessary expenditure of \$730 a year for visiting physicians. The rest of the sum needed would come from the increased revenue from private patients were others than the staff allowed to practice in the hospital.

Under the present system, there are six visiting physicians, each of whom, in regular rotation, takes his month in the hospital. He has to go there every day, see every patient, except such as are under the treatment of other members of the staff, give prescriptions and, when necessary, perform operations. This takes two or three of the morning hours, which are most valuable in a general practice, and there are times when the best part of an afternoon is also required in surgical cases. For all this work the visiting physician receives two dollars a day. Unless he is a mere fledgling in his profession, it is not pretended that this amount is any equivalent for the time and attention he gives to 70 or 80 patients. It is looked upon merely as a retaining fee.

The visiting physician for the month attends to all kinds of cases, medical and surgical. It is a fact, however, that all physicians are not good surgeons, nor are all surgeons good physicians. A man thoroughly versed in the theory of medicine may be a bungling operator, and a man with that mechanical turn which makes him an expert operator may have little interest in a medical case which should have his keenest attention. Now and then a man is first class both as a physician and surgeon, but in many other instances he is only the one or the other. Yet the visiting physician for the month, whether he be a surgeon or not, is the man who performs the operations, and some of these may be such as to require almost the skill of a Simpson or a Valentine Mott.

What seems to be needed is a visiting staff of six physicians and six surgeons, who would give their services free of charge. It is stated the leading medical men of St. John have expressed their willingness to do this under a proper system. It may also be said that the St. John hospital stands almost alone among institutions of the kind in paying even a retaining fee to its visiting staff.

It is understood that the leading physicians of St. John have expressed their wil-

lingness to give a stated portion of their time and attention to the hospital free of charge. That is, they are willing to attend to the worst patients, who are presumably people unable to pay. Every doctor of any standing expects to do more or less work for the sake of charity, and the treatment of poor patients in the hospital would come under this head. With a visiting staff of six physicians and six surgeons—one of each for each month—the amount of time required for daily visits would be small. It would, much of the time, be less than an hour, where two or three hours are now required for one man to go the rounds of the whole house.

The patients in private rooms would not be included in the rounds. At the present time, in ordinary cases, a private patient pays a dollar a day, which covers board, treatment, and medicines prescribed by the visiting physician. As a matter of fact, however, there is always a certain proportion of private patients, and sometimes the larger proportion, who have their own doctor. In most cases, anybody who can afford to pay for a private room can also afford to pay a doctor. There might be exceptional cases under a new system, but a proper discretion could always be exercised.

Thus \$730 a year would be saved in the way of "retainers" to visiting physicians, and with the privilege of hospital practice extended to others than the staff, the revenue from the board of private patients would be more than sufficient to pay for the payment of the salaries of additional nurses. There is little danger of the private rooms being crowded under the conditions named. Of late, for instance, not more than a third of the rooms have had occupants. It was stated recently that the rooms were 24 in number, and at the very least that number could be brought into service, including the three rooms in the front of the building in "Ward Five," on the third floor. As it is now, several available rooms are occupied for other purposes. No. 1, for instance, is the Staff room. It contains a chair, a table and a book in which the visiting doctors record the hours and costs of their visits. They also deposit their hats over the main entrance, and No. 7, directly over the main entrance, is one of the most cheerful rooms in the house, and it is now used as the matron's store room. Several of the rooms in the rear wing, which, however, are not on the sunny side of the house, are utilized as dormitories for the help, but the latter could easily be put in the basement, where some of them sleep at the present time. It may be claimed that the latter portion of the building is damp, but it is certainly not so when the first snow comes in the winter, which is the season when the hospital is most likely to be crowded.

It is not unlikely, even with the hospital, practice thrown open to all city practitioners that all the rooms would at any time be required, but even supposing that they were well patronized, the income of a dollar a day from each would more than pay for the food, attendance, and such extra nurses, if any, as might be required. If only half of them were steadily occupied on an average during the year, the revenue would be more than \$4,000, or three times as much as was received from all the private patients in the year 1892, according to the last printed report.

There are already several rooms used as special wards, such as those for eye cases, etc., and one of them is a children's ward, where there are five little beds contributed by church workers and others. Still, another ward is greatly needed, and that is what may be called a boys' ward. At the present time, half-grown lads are put in the men's ward, but it must be apparent to every thinking person that it is no place for them, and especially since sailors of all kinds are among the patients. It was only the other day that a dying youth in one of the main wards said to a friend: "I wish that boy would not talk so much to that man over there. The man tells him a great many bad things." And so it must be as long as men and boys are kept together.

Two questions arise in connection with the establishing of a boys' ward. The first is as to a location for it and the next as to the cost of beds, etc. The location is an easy matter, for No. 9, a large room, formerly used for special cases, but not so utilized now, would give the requisite accommodation. The cost of the beds cannot afford it, might be met as was the cost of the children's ward, by private subscription. The boys are never many in number, but there seem to be always some, and their present surroundings are not conducive to their good. Everybody acquainted with the hospital must recognize the necessity for some better provision for the boys than there is at the present time.

Odd Materials for Books. Books were originally metal plates or the inner bark of trees. In many cabinets may be found the discharges of soldiers, written on plates. While an agriculturist at Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus in Northern India, was recently tilling his ground, he came upon a copper plate. A Twenty-four of the plates are about eight inches long by twelve inches broad and three, twelve inches by eight inches. The former have huge copper seals with rings attached to the plates, while the three, which appear to constitute one book, were linked together. The plates bear inscriptions relating to dealings in land in the time of Govind Chandra Deva, Sambat 1196-1149. Herod's books were written on leaden tables; lead was used for writing and rolled up like a cylinder. Montaucon notices a very ancient book of eight leaden leaves, which, on the back had rings fastened by a small leaden rod to keep them together. They were afterward engraved on bronze. The laws of the Creteans were on bronze tablets; the Romans etched their public records on brass. The speech of Claudius, engraved on plates of bronze, is preserved at Lyons. Several bronze Treaties between the Romans, Spartans and Jews were written on brass; and estates, for better security, were made over on this enduring material.

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SHOVING SNIDE COINS.

AN ENGLISH EXPERT RELATES SOME OF HIS EXPERIENCES.

Pewter Pots Are Not As Much in Demand as They Were—Counterfeiters Are Not Run in Bonds—How to Tell a Bad Shilling and How to Pass One.

"Aye, at one time it was quite a regular thing to 'collect' public-house pots—pewter ones, you know—for the purpose of making 'snide' (counterfeit) coins," remarked a man recently; "but that would not pay now, for a very good reason. There is such a quantity of counterfeit coin in circulation that tradesmen have got into the habit of 'ringing' a coin on the counter when they receive it, and the sound given out by a pewter coin would at once lead to its detection."

"Now, with the coins I make—oh, yes, I make them all myself—I take advantage of this habit, and although mine has not exactly the same sound as those which come from the mint, the difference is so little that no one but an expert would notice it. These statements were made by an individual whose general appearance, and lead one to believe that he was a respectable, steady-going working man. True, his hair was short, and had evidently been cut in the last fashion; but as he had but recently left prison, this peculiarity would disappear with the lapse of time."

"Now, I take a great deal of trouble with the coins I turn out," he went on; "consequently I make a bit of money by ringing them to others to pass on their own those which are named on the public under my supervision."

"No, I don't pass any myself unless I'm forced to and that's only when I come out of prison, before I've had time to get my 'connection' together. However, you let plenty you don't know."

"I was talking about making the coins; well, unless there have recently been issued coins of a new design—and I like this to happen because it makes my work easier—I always produce counterfeitlets to imitate those that have been in use some time. Unless there has been a new design issued from the Mint, a spick-and-span new coin is always looked at with suspicion."

"I just now mentioned the non ringing properties of coins made of pewter, therefore I don't use it. My coins are made out of hard metal, or rather a composition of two or three. I'll just give you a hint how you can tell the difference between a hard metal counterfeit—it's a new coin has been imitated—and a genuine coin. In a new coin from the Mint the milled edge, being done by a collar, does not extend to the full thickness of the coin, whereas in a hard-metal counterfeit the milled—being done after the head and tail—extends the full thickness of the coin, and unless carefully done, rises about the edges of the head and tail in a sort of 'burr,' which can be felt by passing the nail over it."

"What do I mean by struck? Why, hard-metal counterfeitlets are struck in a die like other coins, and run in a mould, as is generally believed. I always keep one or two moulds and some plaster of Paris about my premises, though, just for 'blind,' in case the police drop on me. I couldn't help smiling the last time but one when I was put away at Her Majesty's expense. The detective who arrested me at my lodgings—this was the only time I ever did so, and then it was owing to one of the boys turning 'nark' and stating in his evidence that on searching the place he found plaster moulds, a battery, some coins and loose metal in my room, all evidently intended for the manufacture of counterfeitlets."

"You see, finding these was enough for him. If he had looked under a loose board in the flooring he would have discovered the different parts of my press and the steel dies which I used; a plant I could not replace under ten pounds."

"How do I manage to imitate worn coins? That is soon done. The design on a coin gets obliterated by constant rubbing and knocking about, don't you? Well, I serve my 'dummies' the same, only I don't take so long about it."

"After I have made them like new ones with an exception of plating, I give both sides of all with coarse emery cloth, then brick-dust, and, finally, rotten-stone or a leather buff, to take out the scratches. Then they are electro-plated and afterward shaken up altogether in a long bag, so as to give the 'wear and tear' a natural appearance. As to 'do flatter myself,' he added proudly, "that any ordinary tradesman would be a bit puzzled, he had to pick out one of my make from half-a-dozen genuine coins."

"How do I get rid of them after they are made? Well, as I said just now, some I sell right out, charging six shillings a dozen for half-crowns, and for the others in proportion. There are one or two low-class book-makers who take two or three pounds worth a week from me. They pay them out to the winners among good coins. Then occasionally I have a day at the races, and I'll just try my luck, 'backing my lancy' in every race—with a different bookmaker, you know—with coins of my own manufacture. At other times I have somebody, either a man or a woman, working under me."

"I carry the stock of coins and—supposing it is a woman—I give her one of them, which she puts in her purse with a little loose silver. Then she enters a shop to make some small purchase while I walk away to a safe distance. When she returns and hands over the change I give her another counterfeitlet, and another purchase is made at a different shop."

"This is kept up all day, and as she usually spends about twopence out of each 'half-crown,' and a good worker will get rid of fifty or sixty in a day, the 'takings' are pretty considerable. That is what we call 'working the queer.'"

"No, I never make any counterfeitlet—overweight or half-sovereigns; they are so difficult to pass and are so risky. You see, with gold coins we have one great obstacle yet to overcome; that is, to find a 'well' which, in a given size and thickness, will come somewhere near the weight of a piece of gold the same dimensions. Platinum and dental alloy are the only two which can be used safely in this respect, and by the time we have purchased the metals (which are costly), obtained the dies, and gilded the coins thoroughly, well after manufacture, there is hardly anything to be got out of it."

"I remember once having a very narrow

escape from 'doing time' in one of her majesty's prisons for trying to pass a good half-sovereign. Ah, you may well look Sunday night—by the way, I had only been out of prison about two months—and when the conductor came up for his fare I had nothing but half-a-sovereign with me. I gave him that to change."

"I'll bring you your change in a minute, sir," said he, going down below—as I supposed to look at the coin by the light."

"Well, several minutes elapsed, and presently the 'bus pulled up outside a public-house. No sooner had it stopped than the conductor called a policeman and gave me in charge for 'uttering' counterfeit coin. He had put the coin in his mouth to try it and had bent up nearly double."

"I was brought up next morning, evidence was given, and my previous conviction was brought well to the front, and the magistrate was on the point of committing me for trial, when I begged him to allow an expert to examine the coin."

"He eventually did so, and it was found to be a genuine half-sovereign, but cracked in the middle. Yes, I was let off; but it was a lucky thing for me that I happened to have no 'snide' silver coins on me when I was charged."

Caught by the Battery. "I once went up the Amazon and Orinoco rivers on an animal-capturing expedition," said an old showman. "I got quite a collection of snakes, birds, and monkeys. I hit on a novel plan for the capture of the latter, and it worked like a charm."

"A monkey is a greater imitator than a Chinaman. He will do anything he sees done, and that is what gets so many of his kind into the cage. I rigged up an electric battery, and attached it to an apparatus that would allow a score of the Simians to get hold of it. I then took a party of natives, and went into the forest where there were trees of monkeys."

"We put the apparatus down, attached the wire, and removed the battery to a considerable distance. The natives then took hold of the apparatus, danced and yelled, and then retired. The monkeys made a dash for it. Half-a-dozen caught hold, and I turned on the current. They began to squeak and squirm, but the others thought their performance a part of the programme, and fairly fell over each other to get hold of the machine."

"I could have caught the whole troop if they could have got hold of the concern. We then made a descent on them with sacks, and soon had a score of them safe. But it would only work once. We tried it a month afterward at a point fifty miles distant, but not a monkey came off his perch in the trees. They viewed the proceedings without any apparent desire to imitate our war-dance around the machine."

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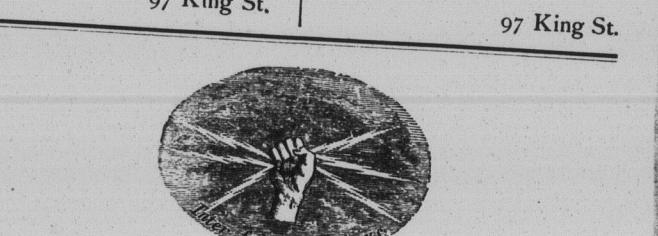
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