

SESSION



1910-1911

President : SIR DAVID GILL, K.C.B.

Visit to St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

On Saturday, May 28, 1910.

A VISIT to St. Bartholomew's Hospital took place on Saturday afternoon, May 28, which proved of great interest to the members and friends privileged to be present. The party was indebted to Mr. A. Watkins, Steward of the Hospital, under whose guidance the tour of the various buildings was made.

St. Bartholomew's is an institution beloved of painters and antiquarians, by reason of the link it forms with the remote past, and the rare examples of architecture it contains, notably the Church of St. Bartholomew the Less, dating from the sixteenth century; the Henry VIII Gate, rebuilt in 1702; and the fine buildings which form the quadrangle, built in the year 1629. Of the original priory and hospital of St. Bartholomew, founded by Rahere in 1123, the only remaining portion is to be found in the venerable Church of St. Bartholomew the Great, now altogether outside the walls of the Hospital. At the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, the priory suffered along with the other religious houses, but the hospital escaped extinction, the king, Henry VIII, granting a charter for it to be refounded, with an endowment of houses and lands. To-day, St. Bartholomew's ranks among the most famous institutions of its kind, essentially modern in its equipment for the fighting of disease.

The first building visited was the Library, a large hall divided into about a dozen bays, each section containing works on a specific department of medical science. Above is the Museum, where much time was spent. In this room are three

large galleries, each with its rows of shelves containing preserved specimens of morbid anatomy, showing the effects of various diseases, accidents, the results of surgical operations, etc., of the highest value to the staff and the 500 students in attendance at the Hospital. The visitors were then conducted to the Medical and Surgical Out-patients' Department, a large well-lighted hall in which, during the course of the day, about 1,200 out-patients wait their turn for treatment. Grouped round and above this room are the special departments for diseases of the throat, eye and ear, dental department, electrical department, deformities, etc., the instruments and equipment of which were the subject of great interest. Among those which attracted most attention were the instruments for examining the throat, the arrangement of the dark room and the instruments, including a powerful electro magnet, for the treatment of ophthalmic cases, the pneumatic dental chairs and accessories, and the electrical baths and batteries for the treatment of skin and other diseases. In the section for deformities is a specially arranged gymnasium, it having been found that minor deformities in children can be cured by regular exercise. One of the operating theatres was then visited and the arrangements for the conducting of operations described.

A visit was then made to the Kitchen Department, where a staff of sixteen cope with the task of providing meals for 1,000 persons daily, a task made possible only by a very complete equipment of gas and steam cookers, potato peelers, and other mechanical aids. In this section is a machine for pasteurising milk, the milk being heated in one part of the machine to 170° F., then suddenly cooled down to 50° by means of brine pipes, the process preventing the milk turning sour for a few days. Near to the boiler house, which was next visited, is a small compressor for refrigerating by the compressed ammonia process, and adjoining this cold store are the two enormous fans for ventilating the building. The air, before reaching the fans, is drawn through a very large horse-hair screen, over which a stream of water is continually playing, and is thus "washed" before being distributed throughout the building.

In the Laboratory, through which the party was then conducted, are prepared all the pills, capsules, ointments, lotions, etc., used in the Hospital, and, as may be imagined, these are prepared on no small scale, the crushing, grinding and mixing

machines being of a size suitable for a prosperous commercial undertaking. The plant includes a machine for making and bottling soda-water. In this department is shown, very appropriately, a pestle and mortar made of bell metal used in the hospital 200 years ago. Above the Laboratory is the Dispensary, where the arrangement of the preparations was explained.

The Hospital contains in all about 740 beds, and in the course of the year about 7,000 in-patients and 130,000 out-patients receive advice and treatment, the prescriptions dispensed totalling well over 1,000 daily.

Crossing the quadrangle, the party was conducted to the Great Hall, in which were shown a number of valuable portraits of famous physicians and surgeons by Kneller, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Wilkie, Millais and Oules. Among the more modern paintings is a portrait of Mr. Sidney Waterlow by Sir Hubert von Herkomer, and a fine portrait of his late Majesty King Edward VII by Sir Luke Fildes. In the grand staircase leading from the hall are two large pictures of "The Good Samaritan" and "The Pool of Bethesda" by Hogarth, and in the Committee Room a portrait of Henry VIII attributed to Holbein.

The visit was brought to a close after making an inspection of the ancient Church of St. Bartholomew the Less, which stands within the Hospital walls.

