

Since one of the chief aims of the Institute is to provide postgraduate training in paediatrics, it has been recognized by Calcutta University as a centre for advanced studies in the specialty and will start courses for the D.C.H. next month. Students may also prepare themselves for the M.D. and D.Phil.(Med.) examinations of Calcutta University through the Institute. Other courses offered include refresher courses for general practitioners. Men and women with experience and training in paediatrics both at Indian and at foreign university centres have been recruited to form the staff of the Institute. They are expected to carry out some of the routine activities of the centre, to teach, and to engage in paediatric research. The staff at present consists of the director and professor of paediatrics; two associate professors of paediatrics; and associate professors of biochemistry and nutrition, of pathology and bacteriology, and of radiology; a visiting ophthalmologist, otolaryngologist, and paediatric surgeon; tutor; and house-physicians.

The entire Institute as planned will have 150 beds and is expected to be completed by December, 1958.

Nova et Vetera

THE ROYAL NORTHERN HOSPITAL 1856-1956

This year the Royal Northern Hospital celebrates its centenary, and Dr. Eric Jewesbury has done well to make available an interesting and readable account of its history.* There has probably never been a more remarkable indirect cause for the origin of a hospital than in the case of the Royal Northern. In 1856 there was on the staff of University College Hospital, London, a young surgeon—Mr. Sherard Freeman Statham—whose language was strong and whose manners were unconventional. On one occasion he was helping to anaesthetize a patient of Mr. Erichsen's when, impatient, he struck the patient's side and said, "Fill your bloody chest"; on another occasion in the presence of the same surgeon he flippantly struck the exposed buttock of a patient. Mr. Erichsen duly reported these occurrences to the authorities of the hospital and Mr. Statham had to leave the staff. Within a month of his dismissal he had arranged to open a hospital near King's Cross, in which he invested much of his small capital and to which he devoted his energies until he died two years later.

At first it was a small venture, a house with sixteen beds in York Road; out-patients were seen between twelve and two each day by the various members of the staff. Soon the in-patient department was removed to Portland Road, then to Caledonian Road. A small hospital called the Spinal Hospital had by this time been blended with it. The need for hospital accommodation in the district was so great that another group of people had started a project to found a Central Hospital for Northern London. Fortunately joint meetings were held and a site in Holloway Road was acquired, on which was built a new building called the Great Northern Central Hospital. Here the hospital permanently settled and continued to extend. The enlarged new hospital was opened in 1888 by the Prince of Wales, who was accompanied by the Princess Alexandra. The district was *en fête* that day, and some of the messages of welcome were peculiar, especially the one which said, "Come again, Prince, and bring your mater." At a later date the hospital was granted royal patronage and was allowed to adopt the name by which it is best known—the Royal Northern Hospital. The Duke of Gloucester is the present patron.

From 1888 to the present time the hospital has gradually extended to meet the increased demands of the region and to keep up with the advances of medical science. The out-

patient department has always been one of the busiest in London. The two secretaries who had most to do with the development of the hospital were Mr. Glenton-Kerr and Mr. Gilbert Panter, particularly the latter, who served the hospital well for more than forty years. Many benefactors assisted the growth of the institution. Sir Howell Williams was for many years a constant source of help and by his generosity the building of the St. David's wing was made possible. Mr. Francis Reckitt gave the money for building the convalescent home which was named after him. In spite of the many sources of financial help the debt on the hospital gradually increased until it reached £200,000. It must have been a (financial) relief when the Government undertook the responsibility.

The Royal Northern was one of the first hospitals to introduce regulations with a view to avoiding abuse of out-patient treatment by persons who could well afford to pay; these regulations were issued in 1890 and were favourably commented upon. The introduction of pay-beds met with much local opposition from the practitioners in the neighbourhood. Though the pay-beds were at first only meant to provide a little extra comfort for those who could not afford the medical fees of the attending physician or surgeon, the doctors contended that, if payment were made at all, the medical fees should have first claim. It was even proposed that the local doctors should boycott the members of the hospital staff, but fortunately wiser counsels prevailed. The board of the hospital stated that they would not persist with the scheme if the local doctors actually suffered loss. The whole matter soon settled down. It was at a later date that the excellent St. David's Wing was provided and run on nursing-home lines.

The Royal Northern has always had a distinguished medical staff. One of the early physicians was Dr. Clifford Beale, who lived to the ripe age of 101 years. Robert Bridges served from 1876 to 1885 and then forsook medicine for the poetic muse and became poet laureate. Dr. William Cholmeley, Sir Andrew Clark, Dr. Blackhall Morison, and Dr. James Galloway were other prominent names, but the most distinguished physician associated with the hospital was Lord Horder, who was on the active staff from 1899 to 1914, and kept up his association with the hospital all the rest of his life. One of the early surgeons was William Adams, who made a name for himself in orthopaedics. C. B. Lockwood, Warren Low, and Arthur Edmunds gave distinguished service for a number of years. Two other names deserve perpetuation in connexion with the Royal Northern—those of C. T. Murdoch, who as treasurer and later chairman of the board helped to establish the hospital, and Sir Dickson Poynder, afterwards Lord Islington, who guided the hospital through some difficult years.

The introduction in 1948 of the National Health Service saw the hospital take its place in the Northern Group of hospitals. The closer integration of the Royal Northern with the Highlands Hospital is forecasted, and it is stated that "some steps in this direction have been taken." Mr. Panter was able to take a part in the smooth introduction of the new régime before he retired in 1952. One rather surprising result of the change-over was the cessation of the Ladies Association and the Ladies League. In many hospitals similar associations still exist and do very good work.

This little book is illustrated by a series of appropriate illustrations which greatly add to its interest; in the days of William Cholmeley, John Gay, and William Adams side-whiskers were the fashion. In reading the accounts of the various methods whereby money had to be raised for the maintenance of the hospital, one heaves a sigh of relief that such uncertain methods are no longer necessary for the upkeep of one of the nation's most essential services. In the lists at the end of the book we miss a list of the matrons and of the secretaries of the hospital.

Everyone will congratulate the Royal Northern on its centenary and will wish it a successful future activity.

ZACHARY COPE.

**The Royal Northern Hospital*. By Eric C. O. Jewesbury, M.A., D.M., M.R.C.P. (Pp. 157+xii. 17s. 6d.) London: H. K. Lewis. 1956