



The *Great* Canadian  
Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the  
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,  
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.

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Projet de la *Grande*  
Histoire  
des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des  
congrégations de religieuses au Canada, leur mission en matière  
de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

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**The Edmonton General Hospital  
1895-1935**

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1895 to 1935

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*In Commemoration of the*  
*Fortieth Anniversary*



1895 -- 1935

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THE MOST REVEREND HENRY JOSEPH O'LEARY, D.D.  
*Archbishop of Edmonton*

## APPRECIATION

It affords me great pleasure to avail myself of this opportunity of extending my congratulations to the Edmonton General Hospital upon the occasion of its fortieth anniversary.

This hospital throughout these long years of service has won for itself the enduring gratitude of the community which it serves.

I wish this institution continued success in the years to come.

R. G. REID, Premier of Alberta.

In the Fortieth Anniversary of the founding of the Edmonton General Hospital the City of Edmonton shares with this institution feelings of joy and contentment at the fulfilment of almost a half century of untiring and never failing devotion to its purpose, the care of the sick.

The City has had every reason to appreciate the co-operation and harmony that has existed between it and the hospital and welcomes the opportunity to express its sincere wishes for many years to come of continued success.

JOSEPH A. CLARKE, Mayor of Edmonton.

To a hospital of which the inhabitants of Edmonton and surrounding districts are justly proud, I wish to offer the congratulations of the Edmonton Academy of Medicine upon its having completed forty years of enviable achievement.

Working ever in harmony and with untiring devotion to duty, the hospital has always earned the respect and admiration of the medical profession which shares with it the joy it possesses in nearly half a century of commendable accomplishment.

DR. H. K. GROFF, President,  
Edmonton Academy of Medicine.



SISTER MARY  
Superior of the  
Edmonton General Hospital

It is a pleasure and a privilege for me to extend to you my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Foundation of the General Hospital. As the first Hospital in Edmonton, it goes back to pioneer days and is, therefore, deserving of a permanent place in the minds and hearts of our citizens.

The General Hospital has been a veritable Pool of Bethesda for ailing and afflicted humanity. How many poor sufferers have gone out from its sheltering walls, cured in body and renewed in soul! What charity has been dispensed during that long span of years, and what heroic self-sacrifice has characterized the work of the Sisters, Doctors and Nurses!

May your Hospital continue its glorious public service, and may the future bring greater opportunities for the exercise of that sympathetic and efficient care of the sick, which is so characteristic of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, or as they are known in the historical annals of the West, the "Grey Nuns."

Yours very faithfully in Xto,

HENRY JOSEPH O'LEARY,  
Archbishop of Edmonton.

On this commemorative occasion the Alberta Medical Association takes much pleasure in tendering its sincerest congratulations to an institution that has done much to uphold the high standard of hospitalization which we in Alberta enjoy. Therefore to the Edmonton General Hospital we extend the heartiest of congratulations on this, the anniversary of its founding.

DR. McNAB,  
President, Alberta Medical Assn.

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AFTER FORTY YEARS

# A Sketch from History

By DR. HEBER JAMIESON

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY of Ville-Marie, an order founded by Mme. d'Youville, took over the General Hospital of Montreal in 1747. They were referred to by some in derision as the "Grey Nuns." This title became in later years one of respect and reverence, and the self-sacrifice and courage shown by the Sisters during the early settlement of Western Canada, where they marched in the van of colonization, seldom halting long enough for the very necessities of life to overtake them, has given the Order a well-deserved place in the hospital and nursing history of Canada.

Mgr. Provencher, the first Bishop of the Red River, wished some assistance in looking after his Indian charges in the North West. Several orders of Sisters were appealed to but were unable to help. Finally it was suggested: "Try the Grey Nuns; they never refuse." So it was that the Sisters of Charity of Ville-Marie entered Northwestern Canada, establishing themselves first at St. Boniface in 1844.

In 1859 after a long trip across the prairies they opened a mission at Lac Ste. Anne. In 1863, at the suggestion of Bishop Tache and Father Lacombe, they moved to St. Albert on account of the unsuitability of the former situation.

After many years of work among the Indians and half-breeds, particularly during the smallpox epidemic of 1870 when almost one-third of the population of the district was swept off by this malady, the Grey Nuns built the first hospital building in Central Alberta. It was a frame structure 80 x 40 feet, with a projection in front 20 x 40 feet, and was joined to the main building of the mission at St. Albert. It cost \$10,000.

The early surgeons of Edmonton, Doctors Braithwaite, Harrison and Wilson, drove nine miles over the rough trails to visit their patients in this hospital.

For the next fourteen years St. Albert, Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan were the three principal centres of population in Central Alberta. St. Albert was the centre of the

Roman Catholic population; Edmonton the chief trading post, and Fort Saskatchewan the district headquarters of the Royal North West Mounted Police. Rivalry was very keen among these villages and it was really not until the railway entered Edmonton from the south that this town gained a distinct advantage and showed signs of outdistancing its neighbors. By 1895 its population was 1600.

On the 21st of May, 1894, Bishop Grandin received at St. Albert the following letter:—

Your Lordship Bishop Grandin:—

We the undersigned doctors of the Village of Edmonton will do all in our power to support a General Hospital which would be constructed by the Grey Nuns in the Village of Edmonton. We pledge ourselves also to support the said hospital to the exclusion of all others, providing that it is built this year with the necessary accommodations and sufficient space to meet the needs of the Village as a general hospital under the direction of the Sisters without a resident doctor.

(Signed) H. C. Wilson,  
H. L. McInnes,  
P. S. Royal,  
J. H. Tofield,  
J. D. Harrison,  
E. A. Braithwaite.

To this Bishop Grandin replied that, although he had nothing to do with the administration of the Order of the Grey Nuns, he would place the matter before the Superior General and do everything in his power to assist in the establishment of such an institution. He pointed out that a hospital, if it were to be a credit to the Village of Edmonton, must be constructed of brick and have a stone foundation. It

—Continued on Page Seventeen.



Le 24 Sept. 1859 fut un jour mémorable pour  
la petite population Catholique du Lac Ste Anne.  
Celle mission était fondée depuis 15 ans déjà, mais ce  
n'était que depuis quelques années seulement que le  
Père de l'Église s'était occupé de perfectionner leurs  
œuvres augmentant tous les jours, ils comencent à  
le desirer de se procurer des Sœurs pour leur aider dans  
leur mission. Ce projet étant approuvé de Mgr Tache, le  
Père P. Lacombe au printemps de 1859 crut à son tour  
le P. P. Remas, de la Rivière Rouge, pour y établir des  
Sœurs. Le 4 Août, elles se mirent en route pour leur grande  
mission, après 51 jours de marche plus ou moins difficile  
et désagréable, elles arrivèrent au Lac Ste Anne le 24 Sept.  
Ce fut un vrai jour de fête pour tout le monde, le  
Père P. Lacombe ne pouvait comment exprimer  
sa joie en apprenant l'heureux voyage qu'elles avaient  
fait. Quelques jours après leur arrivée, les Sœurs cherchèrent  
à l'étude de la langue Cree, étude absolument  
nécessaire alors. Au bout d'une quinzaine de jours  
une école fut ouverte pour les jeunes filles. Presque  
immédiatement d'élèves fréquentèrent cette classe durant  
l'été. Mais au printemps de 1860 les provisions manquant  
très-tôt, les Sœurs furent obligées d'aller à la mission  
pour aller chercher dans les bois de quoi se procurer  
de la viande de gibier. La chasse et la pêche étaient alors  
ces seuls moyens de subsistance et c'est ainsi que la culture  
de la terre leur était presque entièrement inconnue. L'été  
suivant fut consacré pour la récolte. Mais à l'exception  
de votre Sœurie, Mlle d'Youville, les Sœurs furent obligées  
de faire un jour de jeûne pour se procurer de quoi se procurer  
de la viande de gibier. Elles furent obligées de se procurer  
de la viande de gibier avec confiance. Elles furent à la veille  
de manquer de tout nous ne manquons jamais de rien  
pourvu que nous soyons en Dieu et nous ne manquons jamais  
de rien pourvu que nous soyons en Dieu et nous ne manquons jamais  
de rien pourvu que nous soyons en Dieu et nous ne manquons jamais

September 24th, 1859, was a memorable day for the small Catholic population of Lac Ste. Anne. Although this Mission had been in existence for fifteen years, it was only within the last few years that the Oblate Fathers had permanently established themselves there. Seeing their work expanding day by day, they decided to procure Sisters to assist them. Monseigneur Tache approved of this project and in the spring of 1859 Father Lacombe sent his confrere, Father Remas, to Red River to meet the Sisters. On the 4th of August the party set out for their Mission and after a march of fifty-one days of more or less difficulty and inconvenience they arrived at Lac Ste. Anne on September 24th. That was a day of rejoicing for all and Father Lacombe was unable to express his joy on learning of their successful trip.

Some days after their arrival the Sisters began the study of the Cree language, a knowledge of which was absolutely essential. Within fifteen days a school was opened for the young girls and about thirty attended during the winter. In the spring of 1860, supplies becoming scarce, the Metis were obliged to leave the Mission, going to the woods in order that they might procure for themselves the necessities of life, since fishing and hunting were then for these wandering tribes their sole means of support, tilling of the soil being almost unknown to them. The following summer was a poor one for the harvest and following the example of our Venerable Mother d'Youville, the Sisters on more than one occasion repeated those memorable words which every Grey Nun remembers with confidence, "Ever on the threshold of want, yet never lacking the essentials."

EXCERPT FROM THE GREY NUN'S DIARY OF 1860

# A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

By DR. M. R. BOW  
Deputy Minister of Health for Alberta

**T**HE EDMONTON GENERAL HOSPITAL, which was established in 1895 by the Sisters of Charity d'Youville, was the first hospital to open its doors to receive and care for the sick of the Town of Edmonton and the surrounding district. The population of the Town of Edmonton in 1895 was 1,600 and it is estimated that there was a population of 15,000 in the district tributary to Edmonton. To serve this frontier community, the pioneer hospital provided accommodation for thirty-six patients. It is easy to picture what the provision of hospital facilities meant to the people of this frontier community forty years ago. With what added assurance and sense of security the stout hearted pioneers went forward, knowing that hospital facilities were made available for those near and dear to them. Perhaps the most important contribution of the pioneer hospital was in bringing skilled nursing service to this frontier community in maternity and emergency cases, good hospital care in such cases often meaning the difference between early restoration of the patient to health and a long disabling illness or as too often happened, a fatal termination of the case.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the courage, initiative, skill and devotion to duty of the pioneer sisters, nurses and doctors, who contributed so largely to the maintenance of the health and general welfare of our pioneer settlers, as well as to those who have followed the trail blazed forty years ago and who are today maintaining the fine traditions of those early days.

Forty years is a brief period in the history of a people. In the history of this hospital, it has, however, been long enough to have been marked by a real contribution of the upbuilding of the district of which Edmonton is the centre. During this period 71,710 patients have been cared for, 23,665 operations have been performed, 5,105 babies have been brought into the world in this hospital and more than 10,000 children have received the benefit of hospital care.

During the last forty years a remarkable advance has been made in medical science. Since 1885 the expectation of life has increased from approximately twenty-one years to approximately fifty-seven years. Diseases, which struck terror and carried off the helpless victims by the thousands, are now vanished and are today only of historic interest to

us. How much safer is the world in which we live than that of our forefathers. The way has been found to eliminate many of the plagues of mankind and to so treat many other diseases as to rob them of their disabling and death-dealing power. In this great advance hospitals have played an important role and great improvements have been made in hospital equipment and hospital service. The average length of stay in hospitals has been cut in two in the last sixty years. The modern hospital is much more than an institution for the care of the sick. Each year in ever increasing measure it is taking its place as a health centre, recognizing not only its responsibility to provide the most efficient care possible for the patients in its wards, but also its great opportunity to teach people how to maintain good health.

The hospital training school has an important part in this great work, the nurses carrying into the community the ideals of service for which their hospital stands. Every nurse is a health missionary. If she is to serve efficiently in this age of prevention, she must carry a positive message of good health to the community. Since the Training School of the Edmonton General Hospital was established in 1908, 395 nurses have been graduated and have gone out to make their contribution to the health and well being of the people in the varied activities of their profession.

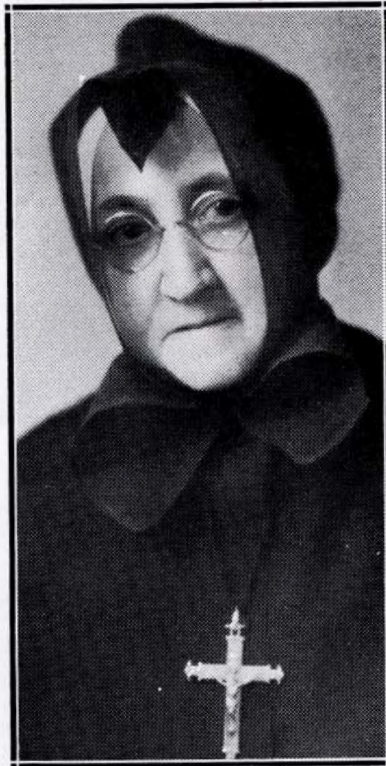
In spite of the remarkable achievements of the last half century in the prevention and control of disease and in the conservation of life, we have hardly more than made a good beginning. If the means were at hand by which we could apply all the public health knowledge we now possess, a greater advance would be achieved in the next fifty years than that which has been recorded in the last half century. This is the challenge to hospitals, graduate nurses and all trained health workers, as well as to every citizen whose concern is the well-being of his country. In a terse phrase "Man's Redemption of Man," Sir Wm. Osler has summed up for us both the objective and the result of the public health movement teaching man to use for his own advantage what is known about preventive medicine.

In concluding this message may I extend to the Sisters of Charity d'Youville my congratulations on the achievements of the past forty years and very best wishes for future success.

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MOTHER PICHE  
General Superior



SISTER GOSSELIN  
One of the First Sisters of the  
Edmonton General Hospital



MOTHER LABERGE  
Provincial Superior

## RADIOLOGY *By Dr. R. B. Mooney, Radiologist*

WHEN ROENTGEN discovered the X-Ray in 1895, the same year that this hospital was built, I am sure he did not foresee the remarkable development and application it was to have on the practice of medicine. The fact that his first experiment showed the outline of the bones of the hand, naturally attracted the attention of the medical profession, and, from that time to the present day, improvements in technique have widened the field of its application in diagnosis and treatment and have marked its steady progress. In perhaps no other field of medicine have the demands been greater and the advancement more rapid.

It may be of interest to many and I believe it is not generally known that just a few days after the announcement of Roentgen's discovery, a certain J. Cox, of McGill University, who had been working on the same lines, reproduced and confirmed Roentgen's work. When the news of the discovery of the X-Ray reached him through a colleague, recently returned from Germany, he realized at once how close he had been to the discovery himself. He then walked into his laboratory and made an X-Ray plate similar to that made only a few days before by Roentgen.

The Edmonton General Hospital, established the same year as Roentgen's discovery was among the first in Canada to install an X-Ray. One of the pioneers in X-Ray diagnosis and treatment in Canada, Dr. George H. Malcolmson designed the first X-Ray department for this hospital, and advised the type of equipment suitable. Since that time other radiologists have come and gone, equipment has been discarded and replaced, until now the X-Ray department of the Edmonton General Hospital is as complete, spacious and well-equipped as any hospital in Canada. If one who pioneered in the development of the X-Ray were to enter the General Hospital today and see the laboratory and intricate equipment, capable of making an X-Ray film in one-twentieth of a second, he would realize the tremendous advance made since the days of Roentgen, when even a much poorer result required twenty minutes. Other advancements in radiological work, such as fluoroscopic examination, film development, improvement in technique and the application of

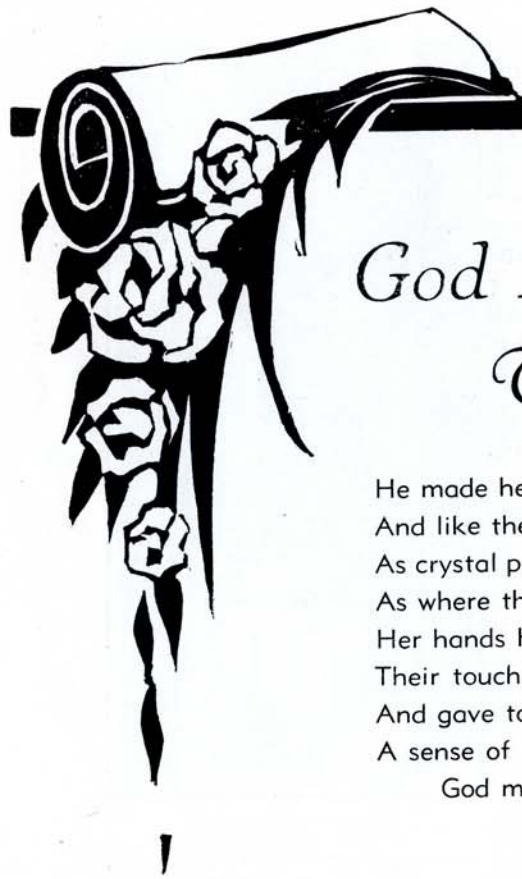
deep X-Ray therapy and radium have made parallel strides. At the present time this pioneer hospital of Northern Alberta is in a position to offer the patient and the doctor a complete radiological accommodation. This includes radium, deep therapy, superficial X-Ray therapy, X-Ray diagnosis and physical therapy treatments.

In concluding this sketch one is tempted to speculate in what will take place in the next forty years. I am inclined to think that the basic foundations in radiology have been well laid and established, and that for some time to come the development will be more along the lines of the application of establishing principles. In this respect the personnel in charge of this department of the hospital can be depended upon to conservatively approach and investigate all the new methods and apply them in the interests of the patient and the doctor.



SISTER CASEY

First Superintendent of Nurses at the  
Edmonton General Hospital



## *God Made The Nurse*

He made her heart—brave, true and kind;  
And like the mountain streams—her mind,  
As crystal pure, yet swift and deep  
As where the waters rush and sleep.  
Her hands He made—firm, tender, skilled,  
Their touch with His own pity filled;  
And gave to make His nurse complete  
A sense of humor, wholesome, sweet.

God made the nurse. Thank God!



# The Church and The Sick

By REV. J. HOLLAND

Chaplain

NO ONE loved and helped the sick more than the Divine Physician Jesus Christ. He healed the most hideous diseases of the body and what is more important the diseases of the soul. It is only natural, therefore, that the Church which Christ founded should continue to care not only for the spiritual needs of mankind but also for its social wants. History testifies that the Church has been a most bountiful benefactor to the world.

Her solicitude in medicine began with the foundation of the church, for one of the Apostles, St. Luke, was a physician by profession. In the early days of Christianity the deacons attended the ailing in their homes and often the bishop's house served as a refuge for those who were homeless. In many instances the bishops themselves were physicians, as Eusebius, Bishop of Rome (309). However, during the first three centuries of the Christian era charitable work towards the sick could not be carried out openly on account of the fierce persecutions against the Christians.

No sooner had the Roman Emperor, Constantine, brought liberty of worship to the Church by the Edict of Milan in 315 than care for the sick became one of the features of Catholic life. Basil the Great, the founder of monasticism in the East, built an important hospital in Caesarea about the year 370; another was erected by St. John Chrysostom at Constantinople about 400; while the first general public hospital in Rome was established under the direction of St. Jerome (340-420). These hospitals consisted of well-built and commodious dwellings laid about the church, and the sick were well supplied with doctors and attendants.

Monasticism which has done so much to form the culture of Europe was from its inception active in medicine. One of the Rules of St. Benedict (480-543), the Father of Monasticism in the West, reads: "Before all things and above all things care must be taken of the sick." The monks in the different countries of Europe copied the medical classics of the Greeks, thus preserving them for posterity when they

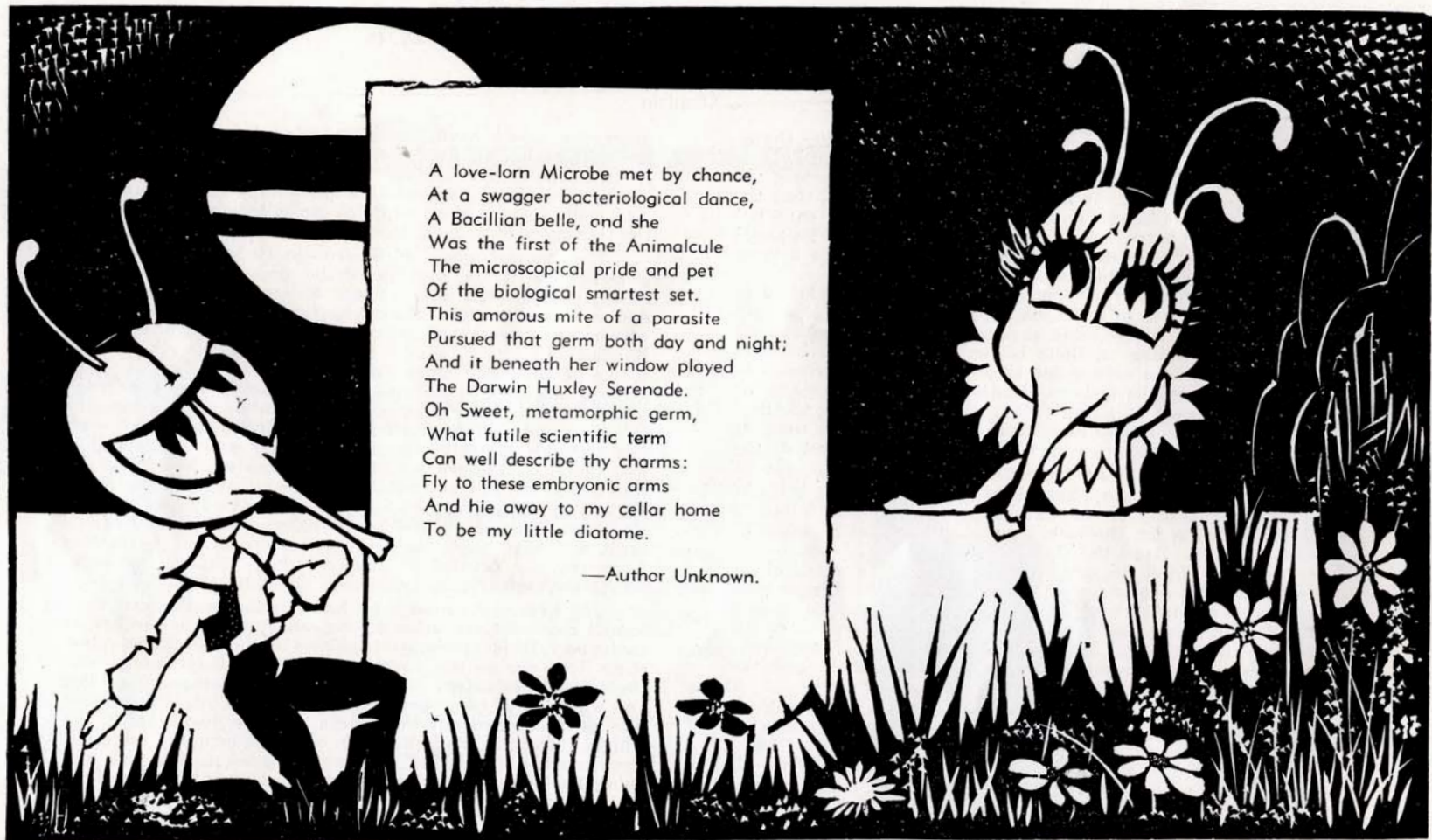
otherwise would have perished during the invasion of the Eastern barbarian hordes which ravaged Europe from the Fifth to the Eighth century. The "guest house" or "hospice" of every monastery served as a shelter for infirm travellers. The monastery gardens supplied herbs which were used for the treatment of various human ills.

The medical school of Salerno in Italy, founded by the Benedictines in 794, was one of the most important Universities in medieval times. There the medical works of the ancients were studied. The celebrated Constantine Africanus, who had made research work in the Arab schools of Babylon, Bagdad and Egypt, gave a new impulse to the school. The works of this man meant very much for the beginning of modern medicine in Europe. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was a remarkable evolution in surgery due in great part to Salerno. This University made its influence felt throughout Italy, Germany, France and England. It was the first Western school to introduce academic degrees. Gurlt, one of the outstanding surgeons of the nineteenth century, praises most highly the textbook on surgery by Roger and Rolando, professors at Salerno in the twelfth century, and says that the surgery performed in the Middle Ages may be favorably compared with that of the early nineteenth century, that is, up to the time of Lister.

The Crusades to the Holy Land in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries offered an impetus to the art of medicine. It is estimated that two million Crusaders lost their lives during the wars against the Mohammedans who threatened the safety of Christianity in Europe. The sick and wounded of these wars had to be cared for. There came into existence two nursing orders, one for men, namely the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, and the other for women, the order of St. Mary Magdalen. The sick and dying Turk was nursed by these two orders in their hospitals

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A love-lorn Microbe met by chance,  
At a swagger bacteriological dance,  
A Bacillian belle, and she  
Was the first of the Animalcule  
The microscopical pride and pet  
Of the biological smartest set.  
This amorous mite of a parasite  
Pursued that germ both day and night;  
And it beneath her window played  
The Darwin Huxley Serenade.  
Oh Sweet, metamorphic germ,  
What futile scientific term  
Can well describe thy charms:  
Fly to these embryonic arms  
And hie away to my cellar home  
To be my little diatome.

—Author Unknown.

# REFLECTIONS

By DR. J. OROBKO

President of the Edmonton General  
Hospital Medical Staff

**W**E CELEBRATE this year the fortieth anniversary of the Edmonton General Hospital.

Erected in 1895 by the Sisters of Charity—the first hospital in this city—it supplied a real need for the rapidly-growing community of Fort des Prairies, which ten years later became the capital of the newly-created province of Alberta.

The Sisters of Charity were always true to the high ideals of Madame d'Youville, who founded their order in 1737. They sacrificed their lives to the care of the sick, the halt, the lame, and the blind. In their hospitals they brought to the "suffering members of Christ" not only the physical but also the spiritual comfort and health. They realized the value of education; and by establishing a Training School for the Nurses, they greatly widened their influence—they transformed, what otherwise would remain an ordinary hospital, into a real temple of health.

The noble efforts of the Sisters were fully appreciated especially by the pioneer physicians, who co-operated to the fullest extent in the development of this institution. The work of the original medical staff consisting of Doctors A. C. Wilson, E. A. Braithwaite, J. D. Harrison, H. J. McInnis, and P. J. Royal, will forever remain an inspiration to the younger generation of physicians. These honored pioneers laid a firm foundation for a steady growth, and now the medical staff of this hospital has over 125 members; representing all the specialties; making available to the suffering humanity all the latest advances in the art and science of medicine in its various branches.

It has a class "A" rating by the American College of Surgeons; is fully approved for the training of the Internes by the Canadian Medical Association; and is affiliated with the University of Alberta as a teaching hospital. Its capacity has increased to 200 beds.

Remarkable progress indeed from the original 36-bed hospital away back in 1895!

This achievement was made possible by the spirit of co-operation between the Sisters and the members of the staff, aided by the most stimulating progress in various branches of medicine in the last four decades.

The teaching of great Hippocrates and Galen dominated the practice of medicine until Vesalius, Harvey, Jenner, Sydenham, Hunter and others swept away the cobwebs of medical authority and dogma, and prepared the ground for the most remarkable progress of medicine and sanitation in the Nineteenth Century. This culminated in the epochal work of the immortal Pasteur and Lister.

The Edmonton General Hospital from its very birth came under the influence of these giants of thought. Could any institution be born under more auspicious influence than that of these great benefactors of humanity?

Indeed it was in the very year of Pasteur's death—almost when he was drawing his last breath—that this hospital was born—as it were—to carry on his principles for the benefit of the suffering mankind.

Joseph Lister's work had by then gained recognition both at home and abroad. His methods of antiseptic and asepsis were of inestimable value in the work of the hospital. The name of this English Quaker will be forever blessed as long as there are wounds to heal and surgery to be done.

It was in the very year of 1895 that Wilhelm Roentgen completed his momentous work and announced his discovery of a new form of radiation, which he called the X-ray, to a group of scientists in Wurzburg. This has become one of the most valuable aids in diagnosis. It revolutionized our conception of the physiology and the pathology of almost every part of the body.

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# RETROSPECT

THE early years of medicine in Edmonton, synonymous with the early life of the Edmonton General Hospital, are preserved to us who have come later by the reminiscences of three medical pioneers of that day whose entertaining and copious fund of recollections prove of immense delight to the historian and even the mildly curious.

Dr. E. A. Braithwaite, Dr. J. D. Harrison and Dr. A. Blais comprise the three remaining members of the medical fraternity of that period, a fraternity of men the character of which is fast disappearing in an age of accurate science and specialized practice, but a fraternity well loved and respected in the memory of the past.

The first of the picturesque trio to cross the western plains was Dr. Braithwaite, who first arrived in Edmonton in 1887. His stay was short but he returned in 1891 as R.N.W.M.P. doctor. A glimpse of that part of the Territories now known as Northern Alberta will indicate the vast need of the medical profession that the district had for at that time there was no doctor between Red Deer and Edmonton and between St. Albert and the Arctic. The Edmonton of that day was small but busy, clustered about a trading post bubbling over with optimism and geniality yes possessing a dominating pioneer spirit that was to foretell the expansion and growth that later was to be hers.

Having studied under the renowned Sir Joseph Lister in King's College Hospital, Dr. Braithwaite found the West a fertile field for his ambitions in surgery of which he possessed the most modern, at the time, working knowledge. He was here but a year when he heard of a young doctor who had just arrived and was registered at a local hotel. So he called on the newcomer. It was Dr. Harrison. From that moment a lasting friendship arose and the team of Braithwaite and Harrison was not long in becoming well known in surgical and medical circles.

A glance at life in those days is imperative to fix in the mind the character of that age. Times were decidedly different although human nature basically was the same. Life was rough yet wholesome, hard yet hardy, rough yet pleasant.

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And in keeping with the times thus was medicine. By our present-day standards it was undoubtedly crude. Antisepsis was new and the mechanics of surgery were awkward. Chloroform was the popular anaesthetic with nitrous oxide for minor operations. Oxygen was "rare as a day in June," for they possessed no tanks in which to store it and rubber gloves were unheard of.

"This was very acceptable to us," tells Dr. Harrison, his kindly eyes twinkling, "for without gloves we possessed much more freedom in an operation with our fingers.

"Yet," he continues, "infection was not more prevalent than now. Maybe it was the constitution of the pioneer or maybe not. But we had little worry with it."

As to operative methods of that time, they differed not much from those now. However, many instances found a doctor without equipment and he was forced to exercise his own ingenuity to tackle a delicate problem which required plenty of operating skill and technique.

One epic adventure of these two doctors deserves its due position in history for its amusing as well as interesting character.

One day an Indian messenger came in from Stony Plains with an urgent request to come to a man's farm to treat an emergency case. Edmonton, to the West, was flanked with forest fires, and the only English the man could speak was to mutter excitedly, "Bush-burns!"

Surmising that the sick call had to do with burns, Doctors Braithwaite and Harrison set out completely equipped with salve and bandages and the like. Arrived at the farm some twenty miles distant they found their patient, his head bashed in by a fence rail, the victim of a neighborly quarrel. The Indian had evidently been referring to the forest fires and not the patient.

Here was a quandary. The tools on hand, according to Dr. Harrison, were a razor, chisel, knife, lined thread and needles and a nail. Nothing undaunted, the pioneer pair set to work. What followed is difficult to describe, yet from the recounting of the event one gathers that with the combina-

tion of instruments, the chisel and nail were finally inserted at each end of the caved-in portion of the skull to raise it up off the brain where it was pressing. At that moment Dr. Braithwaite, who was administering the chloroform, exclaimed, "He's going to pass out!"

"Give me thirty seconds more," gasped Dr. Harrison.

"Can't," whispered the other, "but go ahead anyway."

Doctor Harrison nodded, gave a heave on the nail and the chisel and up came the piece of skull. The patient gave a sigh and commenced to breathe normally again. He was on his feet again in no time, and, we hear, lived happily ever after.

Life was varied and far from monotonous in those days, yet it seemed that even without modern facilities life was more quiet, more leisurely and decidedly pleasant. An average day's trip was by horse and buggy from Edmonton to St. Albert, across to Fort Saskatchewan and then home for supper.

A few years later the third of the remaining pioneer doctors arrived in Edmonton with twelve dollars in his pocket. It was Dr. A. Blais. Originally intending to go on to the coast, the depleted state of his pocketbook procured for Edmonton another man whose kindness and devotion to duty have won for him the respect, love and admiration of all with whom he has come in contact. He found Edmonton well populated with men of his profession, and so practised in St. Albert, from which his itinerary included, as a rule rather than exception, Lac Ste. Anne, Lac La Nonne and Athabasca Landing. That was in the days of the horse and buggy.

Such were the three men who have won for themselves a lasting place in the memory of their profession and the people of Edmonton. Typical of the beloved family doctor and general practitioner, they have endeared themselves to all, and it is their development that follows side by side with that of the Hospital.

—Continued on Page Seventeen.



DR. E. A. BRAITHWAITE



DR. A. BLAIS

*Dr. Aristide Blais*



DR. J. D. HARRISON

[Page Fifteen]

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to our sister hospital upon  
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RETROSPECT —Continued from Page Fifteen.

In 1895 the need for hospitalization in Edmonton was realized with the opening of the Edmonton General Hospital here, due to the efforts of Bishop Grandin, Father Leduc, the Grey Nuns and the medical profession, which comprised at that time Drs. Braithwaite and Harrison, Wilson and McInnis.

In midsummer of 1895 Sister Marie Xavier and Sister Gosselin arrived to prepare the plans for the Hospital. For two months their only available quarters was a shack in which cots took the place of beds, and kegs that of chairs. Six other Sisters arrived in December for the blessing of the new building by Father Grandin. An imposing edifice at that time, the hospital possessed fifty beds and the most up-to-date equipment. It was a source of pride to its sponsors and to the citizenry of the town and districts around.

Such was the medical aspect of Edmonton in the 90's. Such is the portrait of the picturesque era in which the Hospital was begun—an era with a background of pioneers, of men who walked and talked with those most loved and revered by us, Bishop Grandin, Father Lacombe and Father Leduc. Truly there is much reason for pride in our hearts at this the fortieth anniversary of the Hospital—pride of achievement and pride in the spirit of those men and women who made it possible.

A SKETCH FROM HISTORY

—Continued from Page Five.

should be but a short distance from the Catholic Church and should have a good supply of drinking water. He ended his letter thus: "An entire block, I think, would not be too much. What do you think?"

The Superior General of the Gey Nuns in Montreal was favorably disposed to this project and shortly afterwards Sister Brassard, Superior of the Orphanage of St. Albert, purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company forty-six lots, part of which now is occupied by the General Hospital.

The entire block acquired at that time from the Hudson's Bay Company cost \$2300. Since money would be required for the erection, equipment and maintenance of the hospital, the Rev. Father Lacombe suggested that the Village should

be asked to help and a petition was presented to the Council asking for the sum of \$1000, to assist in the construction and furnishing of the hospital. This petition was signed by Dr. D. G. McQueen and four hundred and fifty others and was presented to the Council on August 22nd, 1894.

At a special meeting of the Council a bonus of \$1000 was granted the Sisters. During the winter of 1894-95 material for construction of the hospital was hauled and M. Senecal, architect for St. Boniface, prepared the plans. On the 25th of March, 1895, the excavation for the building was commenced. By November 1st, four rooms were finished on the third storey.

On the evening of the 28th of July, 1895, Sister Marie Xavier, Superior of the future hospital, and Sister Gosselin arrived in Edmonton. While the hospital was being constructed furnishings were in preparation. A donation of sixty pounds of wool for mattresses was received from the Oblate Fathers. The total cost of the hospital at this time was \$30,000.

The Chapel was finished on November 17th and was consecrated by Bishop Grandin assisted by his Vicar-General, Father Leduc.

On the evening of December 16th there arrived at the hospital Sisters Demaris, St. Dosithe and St. Leon to take care of the nursing.

On the 17th of December the first patient was admitted for treatment and was under the care of Dr. Braithwaite. The next day the same doctor told the Sisters that a woman was being admitted for an operation. The Sisters were greatly embarrassed since they had not yet organized for surgical work. They prayed to all the Saints of Heaven to come to their aid. Mde. G., the patient, sent word that she was not able to come that night; that she preferred coming some weeks later. The prayers of the Sisters had been answered.

On December 9th, the editor of The Bulletin, accompanied by Doctors Wilson, Harrison and Braithwaite, paid a visit of inspection to the hospital and the following details appeared in this paper: "The hospital has three stories complete, beside a mansard and a basement. Each floor has two verandahs and the mansard two balconies. The summit of the roof is surmounted by a turret on the top of which is a

—Continued on Page Nineteen.

[Page Seventeen]

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Upon its Fortieth Anniversary

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beautiful gold cross. The General Hospital is actually the largest, the most beautiful and the most expensive building in Edmonton."

Doctors Wilson, Braithwaite, McInnes and Harrison offered to give gratuitous treatment to all poor patients on alternate months. Some months later Doctors T. H. Whitelaw and P. Roy offered to assist.

On the 21st of December the women of Edmonton formed a society called "The Ladies' Aid Society" for the purpose of giving assistance to the hospital. This society was disbanded after ten years of valuable service.

During December 1895 thirty-one patients were treated at the hospital.

In 1898, in honor of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the Mayor and Council of Edmonton organized a public sports day for the benefit of the hospital. A torrential rain interfered with the celebration and the financial return was not what was hoped for. The Sisters thanked the Village for \$88.00 received from the undertaking and suggested that in honor of the Jubilee that they call one of their rooms "Victoria Jubilee Ward."

Notwithstanding the little difficulties which are incident to the development of hospitals of all kinds in any pioneering community the medical men, realizing the valuable work of the Sisters, made increasing use of the institution and in consequence in 1907 a new four-storey addition was required and a new laundry built.

In 1908 it was realized that a training school for nurses was essential for proper care of the sick. Sister Casey was in charge of the first class which had six pupils and was graduated in 1911. The classes became larger and the instruction more complicated. Ever improved methods were introduced. Medical specialists in every branch assisted in the teaching. Higher standards of admission were approved and under the superintendency of Sisters Casey, Fafard, Wagner, Laverty, Chauvin and Tougas, the training school graduated almost four hundred nurses before 1935. These nurses from the pioneer hospital in Edmonton were a blessing to the

doctors and their patients not only in the City but throughout the whole Province. Many of them took special training and were among the first to enter the public health, school and district nursing services.

In the following year there was urgent need of more hospital beds and the number of private rooms was increased.

On August the 21st, 1916, Sister Gosselin, who with Sister Marie Xavier had opened the hospital, after twenty years' faithful service, became Superior. This appointment was a fitting tribute to the splendid self-sacrificing work which she accomplished during the difficult and strenuous years of organization. In this year also the amount of work necessitated the installation of a switchboard for telephone communication between the doctors and the hospital staff.

Ever increasing demand for hospital accommodation forced the authorities to build again in 1920. A west and south wing were then constructed according to the latest scientific knowledge and the entire hospital was remodelled to give the unity necessary for efficient service.

At the present time the Edmonton General Hospital is keeping well abreast of the times. It is approved by the Standardization Committee of the American College of Surgeons, approved for general internship by the Canadian Medical Association, and affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Alberta for clinical teaching. An up-to-date clinical laboratory facilitates the work of the staff and a medical library completes the equipment which a modern hospital demands.

In its forty years of service the General Hospital has grown beyond even the most sanguine dreams of its founders. It has kept faith with the highest traditions of medicine.

The Sisters of Charity of Ville-Marie, true to tenets of their Order, thought not of themselves but of the poor and the sick and endured with fortitude the privations and difficulties incident to their work in a new country. In spite of trials and disappointments, they organized and carried on often through years of financial stress a hospital service second to none in Western Canada.



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throughout the Holy Land, just the same as was the Christian. During the Crusades these nursing orders became very well known and as soon as the truce with the Turks was settled many demands were made for their services. Valuable endowments were granted them in different parts of Europe where they continued their hospital work.

After the Crusades and mainly as a result of them, the people of Europe began to live together in towns much more than before. With the coming of even small cities a need was felt for city hospitals. Pope Innocent III built a model hospital in Rome, entrusting it to the care of Guy of Montpellier (France), who was said to have organized the most successful hospital of the time in his home town. This hospital in Rome was called "Santo Spirito" or the "Holy Spirit" and continued to function as a hospital until about twenty years ago. The buildings were renewed many times since the original foundation and they were regularly supplied with up-to-date improvements in hospital equipment. The "Santo Spirito" soon attained world-wide reputation for its treatment of medical and surgical cases. Pope Innocent's interest in hospitals did not confine itself to Rome but extended to the whole of Christendom. He wished the "Santo Spirito" to be a model for the rest of the world. By his encouragement many hospitals were built throughout Europe—in Italy, France, Germany, Spain and England—based on the "Santo Spirito" in Rome. The movement started during the lifetime of Innocent III was continued after his death, until almost every city of any importance had its own hospital. Practically all of the old famous hospitals in England date their existence from the thirteenth century. St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London was modelled after the "Santo Spirito." St. Thomas' Hospital was founded in 1213 by Richard, Prior of Bermondsey, three years before Innocent III's death. Virchow, the famous German pathologist, records eighty-three city hospitals which were founded in Germany during the thirteenth century. This was the age of good architecture and some of the best architects of the time were entrusted with the responsibility of building hospitals.

During the sixteenth century there lived two saints who were later to become patrons of hospitals and of the sick. They were St. John of God, born in 1495 and founder of the Brothers Hospitallers, and St. Camillus de Lellis, born in

Naples in 1550 and founder of the Servants of Mary. Both these men were greatly concerned with the distress and suffering they saw around them. The motive which actuated their lives of self-sacrifice and devotion was the law of Christian charity. They instructed each member of their respective communities to attend the sick and dying with the same zeal as if they were waiting on Christ, mindful of the words of our Lord Himself: "I was sick and you visited me. . . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (Matt. XXV 36-40). The nursing orders of the Brothers Hospitallers and the Servants of Mary grew quickly and hospitals were established by them in the principal countries of Europe. St. John of God and St. Camillus de Lellis were declared the patrons of hospitals in 1898 by Pope Leo XIII. Our present Holy Father, Pius XI, in view of the progress in hospital work during the present century, has designated anew these two saints as patrons of hospitals, with the earnest desire that all who labour for the sick imitate their Christian charity.

It was the glorious tradition of the solicitude of the Catholic Church for the needy that prompted Madame d'Youville nearly two hundred years ago—in 1738—to found her order of the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) of the Hopital General of Montreal. Madame d'Youville was prompted by the same spirit of charity towards those in distress as was St. John of God. In 1753 her order was granted the same rights and privileges as those given to the Brothers Hospitallers. God has blessed the Grey Nuns in their many institutions in Canada and in the United States where they continue the work begun by their holy foundress. Mother d'Youville was declared Venerable by Pope XIII, and her canonization is being considered in Rome at the present time.

The Grey Nuns have been in Alberta since 1859, when they began at Lac Ste. Anne. Since then their renown has venerated of the oldest hospital in Edmonton—the General extended to many parts of the province. The fortieth anniversary—will be an occasion of rejoicing, not only for the good Sisters who have laboured so well in Alberta, but also for all those who have had the privilege of working with them or benefiting by their kindly solicitude.



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By 1895 the value of ether and chloroform as anaesthetics was already generally established through the work of Crawford Long and William Morton in U.S.A., and J. U. Simpson in England. Anaesthesia robbed the operative surgery of its horrors and together with Lister's asepsis made possible the wonderful progress in this branch of medicine.

It was even as the bricks and mortar of the E. G. H. were put together, that Virchow, Koch, Ehrlich, Wassermann, Osler and many other workers were making tremendous contributions to the fundamental sciences on which modern medicine is based. Continuous progress in biochemistry, physiology, bacteriology, serology, endocrinology, etc., helped the physician and the hospital in its struggles against the disease. As the field of Medicine widened, new departments had to be added; its capacity increased; and its sphere of influence and activity widened.

As a result of all these advances, the physician gradually began to gain the upper hand in his struggle against the disease. Indeed, this struggle is one of the greatest epics in the history of the human race. What a tremendous progress since the earliest known records in the caves of Ariego, France, of a primitive medicine-man of the Cro-Magnon people of 20,000 years ago! Who can calculate the amount of suffering and misery that could have been prevented through the ages, if the modern methods were available! How different the course of the world's history might have been!

The spirit of sympathy, compassion and charity developed very slowly. We see the first traces of the hospital idea in the temples of Imhotep in Egypt and later in the temples of Aesculapius in Greece and Rome. But it was not until the advent of the Christian era that charity assumes the quality of virtue and there is a rapid increase in the number of hospitals all over the Christian world. Within the last hundred years the influence of the hospitals increases and it plays ever more important part in the life of the community, not only in alleviation of suffering and in the care of the sick, but also as centres of research. The striking result of all this activity was a better understanding of all the systems of the human body; more rational methods of treatment; and, most important, the control of infectious and communicable diseases.

This progress became apparent in a marked lengthening of the span of human life. The expectation of life today at

birth is between 55 and 58 years. One hundred years ago it was 35; and 400 years ago it was only 20. In 400 years the average length of human life was nearly tripled!

This was achieved in the last century, and more especially in the last four decades through the discovery that the bacteria are the cause of infections; and consequent development of preventive medicine, vaccines, sera, etc.

Infections strike primarily the children and the young adults. These diseases have been brought under more or less complete control. There is a great increase of life expectation at birth. More children now reach maturity. This is highly gratifying. But it brings with it another problem—the problem of the middle and the old age—the problem of the degenerative and the malignant diseases.

Today these diseases lead our mortality lists. It is a sad fact indeed that our expectation of life of an average individual at forty today is not greater than that of the same age 100 or even 400 years ago! The scientists tell us, on very excellent evidence, that the tissues of the body are potentially immortal. What are the causes of the degenerative changes in the body? How to prevent them? Why the great increase in the incidence of cancer?

The E. G. H. and its medical staff have played their part in the control of the infectious diseases and helped to increase the span of human life. It will be a great privilege indeed for us to be able to contribute, to the limit of our resources, in the solution of the problem of malignancy. The cancer problem, facing us now, is concerned with the most intimate biophysical and biochemical processes of the essential unit of the body—the cell. It is here that the solution of the cancer problem lies. When we unravel the chemistry of the protoplasm, and the intimate metabolism of the cell—the cancer problem will be solved. The task is a difficult one. Considerable progress in this line has already been made—and I am sure that in the next few decades we will have the malignant diseases under control.

The noble example of Pasteur, Lister, Roentgen, Koch, and others, that inspired the E.G.H. and its staff in the past, will continue as a stimulus to a solution of new tasks before us. We shall spare no efforts to solve the problems of cancer and the degenerative diseases. I may go a step further and state that in our contact with mankind, we will work for tolerance and peace, health and happiness, realizing that, after all, man is his own greatest enemy.

[Page Twenty-three]



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