THE 700TH ANNIVERSARY OF BETHLEM.

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THIS year marks the seven hundredth anniversary of the founding of the House of Bethlem. Seven hundred years! It takes us back to the very beginnings of English culture. Much in our constitution that we hold dear dates from this thirteenth century, which saw the foundation of Bethlem. In 1215 King John signed the Magna Carta, and in 1265 Simon de Montfort summoned not only the knights of the shire, but for the first time two representatives from each of the chartered boroughs, the precursor of the House of Commons. It was between these two dates on the Wednesday after the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, which in the year 1247 fell on 23 October, that Simon FitzMary, a citizen of London, signed the deed-poll which founded this hospital. He had given and granted to God and the church of St. Mary of Bethlem all that land of his which he had in the parish of St. Botolph without Bishopsgate London, to wit, all that he had or might have there, in houses, gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, ditches, marshes and all other things appertaining thereto as defined by their boundaries. These extended in length from the king's highway on the east to that ditch on the west which was called Depeditch, and in breadth to the land which belonged to Ralph Dunning on the north and to the land of St. Botolph's church on the south. The gift was for the formation of a priory under the rule and order of the church of Bethlem, the brothers and sisters to wear publicly upon their copes and mantles the badge of a star. He further declared in the deed poll that: "For the greater security of this gift I have placed myself and mine outside the said property, and I have solemnly put in actual possession of it, and have handed over the possession of all things aforesaid to the lord Godfrey of the family of the Prefetti of the city of Rome, at this time bishop-elect of Bethlem (as by our lord the pope confirmed) and at this time actually in England, in his own name, and in that of his successors, and in the name of the chapter of the church of Bethlem. And he has received possession of the said property, and has entered upon it in the form prescribed."

We know little of the first century of our history, but we do know that during this period there occurred two of the worst famines in English history. The first lasted from 1257 to 1259. It was due to a succession of bad harvests, following either cold and backward springs or wet autumns. But the scarcity and dearness of corn would hardly have had such disastrous effects if the country had not been short of circulating coin, which had been drained by levies for the Roman See and its use in bribing electors in the king's brother's candidature for the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. Sixty shiploads of grain were

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brought over from Holland and Germany to feed the starving Londoners. The famine was of course followed by a pestilence. The next famine occurred in 1315–1316. Measures were taken then, as now, to restrict the amount of grain turned into malt. In London 55 persons, children and adults, were crushed to death in a scramble for bread doled out at the Blackfriars.

In the third year of the reign of Edward III, 1330, the house was described as a hospital in a licence granted by the king to the master and brethren to collect alms in England, Ireland and Wales. There was no mention in this record of sisters or canons, but, of course, the use of the term hospital was very broad at this time. In the same year the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to the clergy granting an indulgence of 40 days to all who had "contributed, bequeathed, or in any manner assigned any of their goods in contribution and support of the brothers, proctors, and other poor infirm, dwelling in the said hospital." By the year 1346 the priory appears to have been so poor that the Master, John Matthew de Norton, and the brethren petitioned the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London to be received under their protection. An agreement was made that two Aldermen should be chosen each year, one by the Mayor and Aldermen and the other by the Master and brethren of the house. These were, in effect, the first governors, and apart from supervising the master and brethren they instituted a biannual audit.

In 1348 the Black Death struck England. It was believed to have started in China, and by 1348 it had spread all over the shores of the Mediterranean. By August it had arrived at Melcombe Regis in Dorsetshire. It appeared in London on 1 November. April the following year was the worst month, judging by the number of wills proved, and by Whitsun it was on the decline. In London the highest mortality was over 200 a day, which, according to Creighton, must have represented a total mortality of 20,000, or half the population. The whole of England lost a third to half its inhabitants and did not recover until the reign of Elizabeth. This bubonic plague was the same as the later great plague of London, which occurred in Pepys's time. There was a second epidemic in 1361, a third in 1368–1369, a fourth in 1375, a fifth in 1382, and a sixth in 1390–91. That Bethlem also suffered from the plagues is apparent from the fact that the Pope granted a petition from the hospital at Avignon, 1363.

In 1375 in the forty-eighth year of the reign of Edward III, Bethlem was seized by the Crown as an alien priory. Disputes afterwards arose between the Crown and the City as to their right to appoint the master of Bethlem, but the Crown triumphed, and Richard II, Henry IV, Henry VI and Henry VIII insisted upon and exercised their right of presentation.

The date at which Bethlem first housed mental patients is not known to any degree of accuracy. Stow, in his *Survey of London* states: "Then had ye 'the chapel of our Lady called the Pew with an house, wherein sometime were distraught and lunatick people, of what antiquity founded, or by whom, I have not read, neither of the suppression, but it was said that sometime a king of England, not liking such a kind of people to remain so near his palace, caused them to be moved farther off to Bethlem without Bishopsgate London, and to that hospital the said house

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by Charing Cross doth yet belong." The Royal Commission of 1632 stated: "When the hospital was first employed to the use of distracted people appeareth not. The first mention of it to be employed so was in the beginning of the reign of Richard II." This would make it about 1377. We know for certain that six men who were of unsound mind were confined there in 1403, as the Royal Commission of that date mentions sex homines mente capti as well as instruments of restraint. It is to this Commission, formed to enquire into the defalcations of the porter, one Peter Taverner, that we owe the preservation of a copy of our foundation deed.

In the year 1538, between the act for the suppression of the lesser monasteries and the final dissolution, the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of London petitioned the king for three hospitals and an abbey, not for priests and monks, who, they stated, presumably to get on the right side of the king, had been living carnally and had done "nothing regarding the miserable people lying in the street, offending every clean person passing by the way with their filthy and nasty savors," but that "a greater number of poor and sick persons should be refreshed, maintained, healed, and cured, frankly and freely by physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, who should have stipends to attend for that purpose, so that impotent persons should be relieved thereby and sturdy beggars, not willing to labour, should be punished; and so few or none be seen abroad to ask alms." No attention was paid to this attempt to transfer the administration of the revenues of several establishments to the corporation of the City of London until 1546, and finally on 13 January, 1547, in the 38th year of his reign, Henry VIII granted by royal charter to the Mayor, Commonalty and citizens of London, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, to be called "The House of the Poor, in West Smithfield, near London, of the Foundation of King Henry VIII," and the house and hospital called Bethlem, situate without and near Bishopsgate of the said City of London. The charter of Henry VIII was confirmed by another granted by Charles I, dated 1638. In 1553 Edward VI granted by Royal Charter the three hospitals, Christ's, Bridewell and St. Thomas the Apostle to the Mayor, Commonalty and citizens of the City of London. At a general court, held at Christ's Hospital, 27 September, 1557, separate governors and four several treasurers were appointed for the hospitals of Christ's, St. Thomas, St. Bartholomew, and Bridewell, to which latter hospital the house of Bethlem, though totally distinct in its object, was annexed, one treasurer and the same governors being appointed for both. The union between Bridewell and Bethlem has continued to the present day, and was confirmed by the Act 22, George III. By an order of Common Council, 1587, it was laid down that the unemployment problem of the time should be dealt with in the following way:

"The stout and strong vagabonds to labor in scowring the towne ditches and their diet to be provided for a time by the governors of Bridewell until further orders be taken.

"The sick, sore and lame, which are cureable, to be sent to the hospitals of St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas.

"The small children, which are infants and not able to work, and born in the city, to be kept in the Christ Hospital.

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"The women and others of small strength to be employed in the work of the house of Bridewell, or otherwise, at the discretion of the governors.

"And such and so many as have not been resident in this city and liberties aforesaid, to be conveyed from constable to constable according to the statute."

Pope, in the "Dunciad," mentions Bridewell:

> "This labour past, by Bridewell all descend,
> (As morning prayer, and flagellation end)
> To where Fleet-ditch with disemboguing streams
> Rolls the large tribute of dead dogs to Thames."

He makes a note to the effect that it was between eleven and twelve in the morning, after church service, that criminals were whipped in Bridewell.

As early as 1603, when Stow published his *Survey of London*, the surroundings of Bethlem appear to have been none too savoury. He writes of St. Botolph's Church, mentioned in our foundation deed: "The parish church of St. Buttolph without Bishopsgate, in a fair churchyard, adjoining to the town ditch, upon the very bank thereof, but of old time inclosed with a comely wall of brick, . . .

"Now without this churchyard wall is a causeway, leading to a quadrant, called Petty France, of Frenchmen dwelling there, and to other dwelling houses, lately built on the bank of the said ditch by some citizens of London, that more regarded their own private gain than the common good of the city; for by means of this causeway raised on the bank, and soilage of houses, with other filthiness cast into the ditch, the same is now forced to a narrow channel, and almost filled up with unsavoury things, to the danger of impoisoning the whole city.

"Next unto the parish church of St. Buttolph is a fair inn for receipt of travellers; then an hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, founded by Simon FitzMary, one of the sheriffs of London, in the year 1246 (he got the date wrong), he founded it to have been a priory of canons, with brethren and sisters; and King Edward III granted a protection, which I have seen, for the brethren, Miliciae beatae Mariae de Bethlem, within the city of London, the 14th year of his reign. It was an hospital for distracted people . . . the church and chapel whereof were taken down in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and houses built there by the governors of Christ's Hospital in London. In this place people that be distraight in wits are, by the suit of their friends, received and kept as afore, but not without charges to their bringers in. In the year 1569, Sir Thomas Roe, merchant-tailor, mayor, caused to be inclosed with a wall of brick one acre of ground, being part of the said hospital of Bethlem; to wit, on the west, on the bank of Deep Ditch, so called, parting the said hospital of Bethlem from the More field: this he did for burial and ease of such parishes in London as wanted ground convenient within their parishes. The lady his wife was there buried, (by whose persuasion he inclosed it), but himself, born in London, was buried in the parish church of Hackney.

"From this hospital northward, upon the street's side, many houses have been built with alleys backward, of late time too much pestered with people

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(a great cause of infection) up to the bars." The earliest description of the hospital which has been found is in an entry made in the muniment book, 1632 :

" Bethlem, wherein the poor distracted persons are kept.

" One messuage newly builded of brick at the charge of the said hospital, containing a cellar, a kitchen, a hall, four chambers, and a garret, being newly added unto the old rooms.

" Item, the old house, containing below stairs a parlour, a kitchen, two larders, a long entry throughout the house, and 21 rooms wherein the poor distracted people lie, and above the stairs eight rooms more for servants and the poor to lie in, and a long waste room now being contrived and in work, to make eight rooms more for poor people to lodge where they lacked room before."

In the minutes of a court held in 1644 it stated that 44 lunatics at least were kept continually at Bethlem with diet and physic and other relief, and that the rents and revenues did not amount to two-thirds of the yearly charge.

The first or medieval Bethlem is coming to its end. The second hospital in Moorfields was started in 1675 and completed in July, 1676. It is a convenient moment to ask what views were held on medicine and physiology during these first centuries of Bethlem's history. We could do worse than go to John Donne, who flourished, if such a word can be used of that gloomy dean, during the early part of the seventeenth century :

" Thou art to narrow, wretch, to comprehend
Even they selfe : yea though thou wouldst but bend
To know they body. Have not all soules thought
For many ages, that our body' is wrought
Of Ayre, and Fire, and other elements ?
And now they think of new ingredients,
And one Soule thinks one, and another way
Another thinks, and 'tis an even lay.
Knowst thou but how the stone doth enter in
The bladders cave, and never breake the skinne ?
Know'st thou how blood, which to the heart doth flow,
Doth from one ventricle to th'other goe ?
And for the putrid stuffe, which thou dost spit,
Know'st thou how thy lungs have attracted it ?
There are no passages, so that there is
(For ought thou know'st) piercing of substances.
And of those many opinions which men raise
Of Nailes and Haires, dost thou know which to praise ? "

When we come to the more nearly psychiatric angle, we have the hypothesis of vapors :

" But what have I done, either to breed, or to breath these vapors ? They tell me it is my Melancholy ; Did I infuse, did I drinke in Melancholy into my selfe ? It is my thoughtfulnesse ; was I not made to thinke ? It is my study ; doth not my calling call for that ? I have done nothing wilfully, perversely toward it, yet must suffer in it, die by it ; There are too many Examples of men, that have bin their own executioners, and that have made hard shift to bee so ; Some have always had poyson about them, in a hollow ring upon their finger, and some in their pen that they used to write with ;

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some have beat out their braines at the wal of their prison, and some have eate the fire out of their chimneys; and one is said to have come neerer our case than so, to have strangled himself, though his hands were bound, by crushing his throat between his knees; But I doe nothing upon my selfe, and yet am mine owne Executioner. And we have heard of death upon small occasions, and by scorneful instruments; a pinne, a combe, a haire, pulled, hath gangred, and kill'd; But when I have saide, a vapour, if I were asked again, what is a vapour, I could not tell, it is so insensible a thing; so neere nothing is that that reduces us to nothing."

The last years of the old hospital saw the Great Plague of 1665, and the Fire of London in 1666, which however spared Bishopsgate. Pepys made a note in his diary 19 February, 1669, that he spent the day at the office and the young ones went to Bedlam. This habit of treating the hospital as a peep-show continued well into the eighteenth century, and in Hogarth's painting of 1735 (the last of The Rake's Progress) a lady and her maid are shown going round the male side, the lady modestly hiding her face behind her fan, while the maid describes to her the appearance of an almost naked male patient.

The second Bethlem in Moorfields was a building of considerable architectural merit, as one can see from the many prints of it still in existence. It was said to have been built in imitation of the Tuileries. It was described in the 1754 edition of Stow's *Survey* as consisting of two galleries over the other, 193 yards long, 13 feet high, and 16 feet broad, not including the cells for the patients, which were 12 feet deep. These galleries were divided in the middle by two iron gates separating the male and female sides. These gates and the cells appear in Hogarth's celebrated print. It was of this building that Gay wrote:

> "Through fam'd Moorfields, extends a spacious seat;
> Where mortals of exalted wit retreat;
> Where, wrapp'd in contemplation and in straw,
> The wiser few from the mad world withdraw."

Two wings were later added, one in 1725, the other in 1733, for male and female incurable patients. The Moorfields hospital was in continuous use until 1815.

Pope not only makes a number of references to this hospital, but also mentions one of the physicians of the time:

> "And when I flatter, let my dirty leaves
> (Like journals, odes, and such forgotten things
> As Eusden, Philips, Settle, writ of kings)
> Clothe spice, line trunks, or fluttering in a row,
> Befringe the rails of Bedlam or Soho."

In another imitation of Horace he wrote:

> "Sure I should want the care of ten Monroes,
> If I would scribble rather than repose."

Actually there were four Monros at Bethlem, to whom I will refer later.

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In 1800 the architects reported the hospital to be in an insecure condition, and in 1815 the patients were transferred to the third Bethlem in St. George's Fields, which was begun in 1812. This building with the dome, which was completed in 1846, was in use until 1930, when we moved to Monks Orchard. The central part of the old hospital including the dome is all that is now left and serves as the Imperial War Museum.

It is difficult, when covering seven centuries in half-an-hour, to give more than an impressionistic picture, but there are several examples of the impact of Bethlem on the outer world which are worth mentioning. Langland apparently considered the wandering monks of Bethlem to be a nuisance as he wrote :

" A peril to the popes and prelates that he maketh, that bear bishops names of Bedleem and Babiloigne, that hop about in England to hallow men's altars, and creep about among the clergy, hearing confessions, which they have no right to do."

Later there was the nuisance of the Bedlam beggars, who pretended to be ex-patients. You will remember how the fleeing Edgar in *King Lear* cried :

" I heard myself proclaim'd ;
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunt. No port is free, no place,
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape
I will preserve myself ; and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury in contempt of man
Brought near to beast : my hair I'll grime with filth,
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,
And with presented nakedness out-face
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary ;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod ! poor Tom !
That's something yet : Edgar I nothing am."

Another impact of Bethlem on the outer world, altogether beneficial this time, was the patronage by the second Monro, Dr. Thomas Monro of the brilliant English school of water colourists, probably, outside the Chinese, the greatest water-colourists the world has seen. Alexander Cozens, who had come from Russia to England and taught drawing at Eton, had a son J. R. Cozens, who had a complete nervous breakdown and died under Dr. Monro's care in 1799. According to Faringdon, " Turner and Girtin told us they had been employed by Dr. Monro three years to draw at his house in the evening . . ." Girtin drew in outlines and Turner washed in the effects. They were employed chiefly in copying the outlines and unfinished drawings of Cozens, etc., of which copies they made finished drawings. Girtin, Turner, Cotman, Varley and de Windt all worked at Dr. Monro's, copied Cozens and stimulated one another, yet retained their individuality.

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The first physician to be connected with the hospital was John Arundell, not apparently in his capacity as a physician, but as master of the hospital in 1457–1458. Previously in 1453 Henry VI had lost his reason, memory, and powers of speech and movement, and Arundell, who was his chaplain, confessor, and first physician, was authorized with other physicians and surgeons to administer head purges, and to shave the king's head, and to give him baths.

From 1619–1634 Hilkia Crooke was physician and Keeper, but he appears to have been largely an absentee placeman. From 1634 a regime was instituted in which there was a non-resident physician, an apothecary and a visiting surgeon. Of the earlier non-resident physicians, the best known is Edward Tyson, whose name is commemorated in our present acute block. He was physician from 1684–1708. The remarkable family dynasty of Monro's, in which son followed father for four generations, lasted from 1728–1853. A descendant of this family was still a licensee of Brooke House up to its bombing in the late war. Thomas Monro, the art patron, has already been mentioned. Henry Monro, the son of the last Monro, did not get on the staff but was trained in the wards of the hospital. In 1851 he published *Remarks on Insanity, its Nature and Treatment.* In this book he proposed the hypothesis of positive and negative symptoms which Hughlings Jackson adopted with acknowledgments, and elaborated so successfully. So that the family, which enjoyed the fruits of office for so long, helped materially to contribute to the foundations of modern neurology.

John Haslam, apothecary to the hospital, in his *Observations on Madness and Melancholy*, 1798, described a case of general paralysis of the insane without recognizing it as a specific entity.

In 1853 the custom of having non-resident physicians ceased, and William Charles Hood became the first resident physician as opposed to resident apothecary. He raised the social standard of the patients, and was instrumental in having the criminal patients removed. The present type of regime is a direct continuation from his day.

While many things have been improved since those days, it is sad to recall that in 1823 the butter ration was 16 ounces per week, that the patients had half a pound of corn beef on Sundays and a roast on two other days of the week. Excellent table beer was served without any stint of allowance, but the average quantity did not exceed a quart per patient per day.

A tendency to undue reminiscence is a sign of approaching senility. Old we may be, senile we are not, so I will make an end. "Do on then fast, I pray thee. Look now forwards and let the backwards be."

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