

VAN DIE REDAKSIE : EDITORIAL

DIE HONDERDJARIGE HERDENKING VAN DIE SOMERSET-HOSPITAAL, KAAPSTAD

'n Hospitaal staan soms in 'n heel besondere verband met die agtergrond waaruit hy spruit, die omgewing wat hy bedien, en die persone wat deur verbeeldingryke toewyding bygedra het tot sy skepping en ontstaan. Orals oor die wêreld is daar voorbeelde van sulke hospitale, en in ons eie land is daar ook verskeie inrigtings wat op so 'n spesiale verbondenheid van gemeenskapsdiens kan roem. Een uitstaande voorbeeld van so 'n inrigting is die Nuwe Somerset-hospitaal in Kaapstad wat op 23 Augustus 1962 sy kliniese, honderdjarige herdenkingsfees vier.

Die hoeksteen van dié hospitaal is in Augustus 1859 deur Sir George Grey, die destydse Goewerneur van die Kaapkolonie, gelê, en die honderdjarige herdenking van dié geleentheid het in Augustus 1959 plaasgevind. Die hospitaal self is egter eers 'n paar jaar na die legging van die hoeksteen voltooi, en die eerste pasiënt is in Augustus 1862 toegelaat. Augustus 1962 is dus die regte datum vir die viering van die hospitaal se honderdjarige herdenkingsfees, en ons voel trots daarop om in staat te wees om hierdie feesuitgawe van die *Tydskrif* te kan aanbied ter gedagtenis aan die baie manne en vroue wat hulle deur die jare, deur hul verhouding met dié hospitaal, toegewy het aan die ideaal van positiewe, onbaatsugtige naastediens.

Die geskiedenis van hierdie unieke hospitaal en sy verbondenheid met die 'ou' Kaapstad is goed bekend, en die interessantste fasette van dié geskiedenis word van naderby toegelig in die reeks historiese artikels wat elders in hierdie uitgawe verskyn. Daarop hoef ons dus nie hier verder in te gaan nie. Wat ons egter tog wil doen, is om kortliks die lig van 'n breëre historiese perspektief op

die betekenis van dié besondere inrigting te laat val.

Die beroemde essayis Ralph Waldo Emerson, het in sy stimulerende essay oor 'Self-reliance' onder andere gesê: 'n Inrigting is die verlengde skadu van een mens'. As ons hierdie woorde in 'n breëre verband omskryf en toepas, sou ons die ontstaan en die instandhouding van die

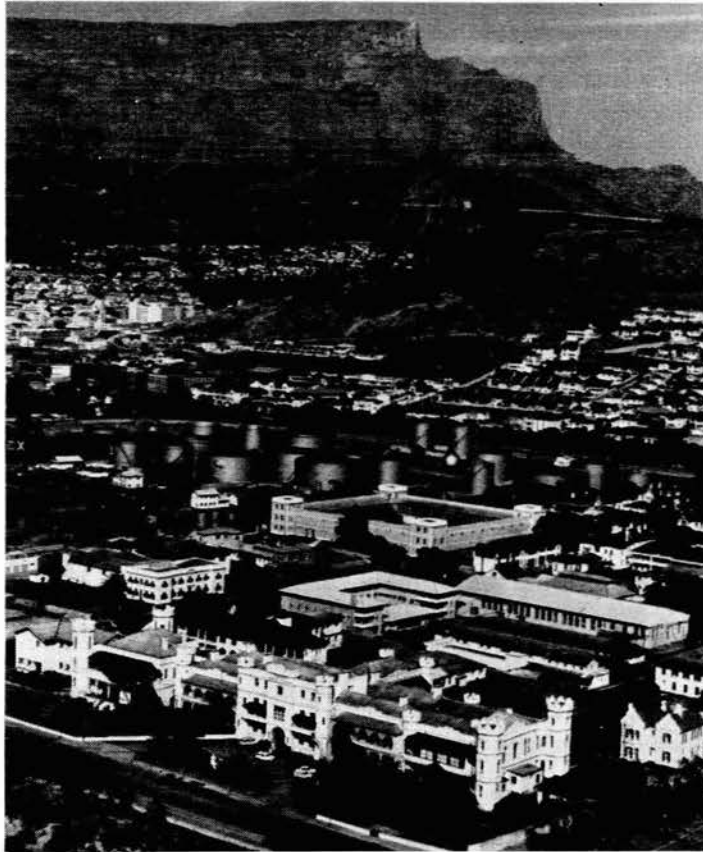
Somerset-hospitaal kan sien as vrug op die toewydingsarbeid van mense wat op 'n heel besondere manier met 'n ideaal van selflose diens besiel was — 'n ideaal wat in hierdie geval oor die loop van jare in 'n heel kenmerkende tradisie ontwikkel het.

Die essensie van hierdie tradisie in ons mediese geskiedenis word beliggaam in die naastiglike besorgdheid oor en versorging van die siekes en behoeftiges van die Kaap, soos blyk uit die lewe en optrede van geneeshere soos drs. Samuel Bailey en Henry Bickersteth, en van baie andere wat die tradisie van die 'Ou' na die 'Nuwe' Somerset oorgedra en voortgesit het.

Die betekenis van hierdie tradisie van diens waarna ons verwys het, word verder beliggaam in die sonderlinge ondernemingsgees wat dr. Bailey in staat gestel het om die

'Ou' Somerset-hospitaal te beplan, te laat bou, self daarvoor te betaal en dit in stand te hou; en wat dr. Bickersteth gedryf het om sonder verposing te ywer vir die bou van 'n nuwer en meer doeltreffende 'moderne' hospitaal.

Ook word hierdie tradisie op sy beste verteenwoordig deur die geskiedenis en loopbaan van dr. Bickersteth self. Dit word vandag as aksioma aanvaar dat die dokter 'n lewenslange student, nie net van siektes nie, maar ook van mense moet wees. Dr. Bickersteth se loopbaan bewys



Die Somerset-hospitaal soos hy vandag daar uitsien met Tafelberg in die agtergrond.

(Foto: Terence McNally)

dat hy meer as honderd jaar gelede al hierdie opvattinge toegedaan was. Hy het as student begin werk, 'n leerling-geneesheer geword, en uiteindelik gekwalifiseer en gewerk as Suid-Afrika se eerste chirurg met 'n hoër kwalifikasie. Niemand het hom sterker beywer vir die bou van die Nuwe Somerset-hospitaal as dr. Bickersteth self nie, en dit is treffend om te sien hoedat die ironiese verloop van die geskiedenis dit so bepaal het dat hierdie yweraar en voorvegter vir die nuwe hospitaal op 6 Augustus 1862 moes sterf—omtrent 14 dae voordat die eerste pasiënt tot die hospitaal toegelaat kon word.

Dat die Somerset-hospitaal deur die jare 'n dinamiese, lewende, moderne inrigting gebly het, ten spyte van sy opvallende fisiese en argitektoniese gebreke en tekortkominge, word gestaaf deur sy geskiedenis. Dit is die hospitaal waarin die eerste sistematiese mediese opleiding in Suid-Afrika begin is. Dit is die hospitaal waarin die eerste twee mediese praktisyns wat in Suid-Afrika gekwalifiseer het, dr. J. B. Solomon en wyle dr. L. Mirvish, hul kliniese werk geleer het. Dit is ook die hospitaal waaraan 'n hele reeks vooraanstaande professionele persone oor 'n tydperk van baie jare verbonde was.

In sy prikkelende bespreking van die probleem van 'Nagraadse mediese onderrig', beklemtoon prof. George Pickering, Regius Professor van Interne Geneeskunde van die Universiteit van Oxford, die belangrike rol wat die sogenaamde *streekshospitaal* vandag in die mediese beroepswêreld speel—as 'n plek waar interns, algemene

praktisyns, spesialiste, en onderwys- en ander personeel almal saamwerk en ontmoet sodat hulle hulself gedurig kan opskerp tot voordeel van hulself en in die belang van hul pasiënte. Dit, in hoofsaak, is wat die huidige posisie van die Somerset-hospitaal is.

By 'n geleentheid soos hierdie is dit goed om stil te staan en terug te kyk, en om ons pogings om te voorsien in die behoeftes van siekes in kritiese heroorweging te neem. Presies hoe hospitaal- en verplegingsdienste die eerste keer ontstaan het, weet ons nie. Dit lyk nie of die begrip van hospitaaldienste, soos ons dit vandag ken, enigszins noemenswaardig in die antieke lande soos byvoorbeeld in Griekeland of Rome of Judea of Egipte ontwikkel het nie; ook nie in Afrika nie—ten spyte van die feit dat daar altyd 'n sekere tradisie van 'heelmeesters' in dié lande was.

Dit wil voorkom of die moderne begrip van hospitaaldienste deur die eeue ontwikkel het uit die vroeë Christelike tradisie van versorging van die oues van dae, die gebreklikes, en die siekes en behoeftiges in die algemeen. Hoe dit ook al sy, dit is ons bedoeling om in hierdie feesuitgawe 'n beeld te gee van die Somerset as 'n moderne hospitaal, wat tegelykertyd ook een van die unieke historiese hospitale van Suid-Afrika is—'n plek waar leek en vakman, algemene praktisyn en spesialis, en geneesheer en verpleegster saamwerk in 'n verenigde front teen die alomteenwoordige bedreiging van siekte en ongesteldheid en die brose natuur van die mens.

CLINICAL CENTENARY OF THE SOMERSET HOSPITAL, CAPE TOWN

This month marks the hundredth anniversary of the day on which the first patient was admitted to the 'New' Somerset Hospital. The foundation-stone of this hospital, which was destined to become South Africa's first teaching hospital, was laid in August 1859 by the Governor of the old Cape Colony, Sir George Grey, but the building itself was only completed a couple of years later. The first patient was admitted to the 'new' hospital in August 1862, so that this month is rightly being commemorated as the clinical centenary of this historic institution. This special souvenir issue of the *Journal* is being published both as a compliment to this time-honoured hospital on its centenary and as a tribute to those dedicated men and women without whose selfless service there would never have been a Somerset Hospital.

The 'Somerset' occupies a very special place in the history of medicine and in the establishment of a characteristic and distinctive medical tradition in this country. The broad outlines of this history are well known, and some of

the more interesting and striking facets of the background of the hospital are described in the series of historical articles and photographs which are published in this issue of the *Journal*. We need therefore not dwell on the history of the hospital. It would however be fitting to try to make a brief critical assessment of the true place of this historic hospital in the development of medical thinking and practice in this country.

In his provocative essay on 'Self-reliance', Ralph Waldo Emerson, that great master of the pungent epigram, said: 'An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man'. How applicable these words are to the historic chain of

events in the evolution of this unique hospital. In applying this pronouncement to the Somerset and to all the circumstances under which it arose, it can be truly said that this hospital came into being through the tireless service and selfless devotion of a few dedicated individuals. It is to the lasting credit of those that came after the 'masters' that this tradition of service has been perpetuated



The Somerset Hospital in 1878

up to the present day and that it has developed into a distinctive 'Somerset tradition'.

The importance of this tradition in our medical history is shown by the solicitous concern and care for the sick and needy of the Cape, as illustrated by the lives and efforts of Dr. Samuel Bailey, Dr. Henry Bickersteth, and others at the 'Old' Somerset, with the work continued at the 'New'.

The importance of this tradition is further shown by the spirit of medical entrepreneurship manifested by Dr. Bailey, who conceived the idea of the Old Somerset Hospital, actually built it and paid for it himself, and maintained it over a number of years; and by Dr. Bickersteth who ceaselessly and successfully advocated and worked for the erection of the New Hospital.

Lastly, the importance of this tradition is illustrated by the career and example of Dr. Bickersteth himself, who showed what a man could achieve with energy and determination—starting as a medical student, becoming a medical apprentice, and continuing his life-long study of diseases and men throughout his professional career, to become the first surgeon with a higher qualification to practice the art of surgery in this country—all this more than a century before the World Conference on Medical Education met to discuss the subject of: 'Medicine—a life-long study'.

That the Somerset Hospital has remained, in spite of its physical and architectural defects and shortcomings, a vital, modern institution, keeping well abreast of the times in all respects, is amply proved by its recent history. It became the first hospital in which systematic medical teaching and training was undertaken in South Africa. It is the hospital in which the first medical students who graduated in this country, Dr. J. B. Solomon and the late Dr. L. Mirvish, learned their clinical work. And it is also the hospital which, during the first three or four decades of the present century, attracted an unequalled succession of eminent professional men, among whom were Drs. S. W. F. Richardson, H. A. Moffat, E. E. Mossop, A. R. McLachlan, Hugh Smith, C. C. Elliott, E. B. Fuller, T. Lindsay Sandes, A. D. Ketchen, J. Luckhoff, D. P.

Marais, J. B. Lester, W. Lennox Gordon, F. Forman, D. J. Wood, C. E. Jones-Phillipson, J. S. du Toit, A. W. S. Sichel, S. F. Silberbauer, D. Dowie Dunn, C. Louis Leipoldt, D. P. de Villiers, and Profs. C. F. M. Saint, A. W. Falconer, E. C. Crichton, and many others.

In his stimulating discussion of the problem of 'Post-graduate education, the present opportunity and the immediate need', Prof. George Pickering, Regius Professor of Medicine at the University of Oxford, recently stressed the important role of *the regional hospital* as a place at which interns, practitioners, consultants, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff all meet and keep in contact, and at which they can profitably continue their *self-education* to the betterment of themselves and in the interests of their patients.

This is, in essence, the present position of the New Somerset Hospital: It is a hospital with a varied and chequered career; it started as the 'New' Hospital in relation to the 'Old' Somerset Hospital in 1862 to serve the sick and needy of the Cape; it witnessed the development of the specialties (ophthalmology—Dr. D. J. Wood, and urology—Dr. E. B. Fuller); it witnessed the first medical students undergo clinical training in South Africa, by becoming the teaching hospital of the Medical School of the University of Cape Town, and it witnessed the cessation of medical teaching; it became a hospital staffed by 'honorary' practitioners and consultants; and it now witnesses the co-existence, collaboration, and cooperation of general practitioners, consultants, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, registrars, resident medical officers, interns, and, last but not least, those indefatigable keepers of the flame, the members of the nursing profession, without whose loving care and devotion some of the most dramatic chapters in modern medicine would never have been written—all of them playing their part, singly or collectively, in carrying on a truly great and worthy tradition. They are congratulated on their presence in the hospital in this centenary year and are wished well in their work, their studies, their careers and their care of their patients.