

# HOSPITAL MANAGED SOLELY BY WOMEN

**A**WAY from the noise of traffic and of the omnipresent trolley car, situated in what is practically a delightful park filled with flowers of brightest hues and trees of graceful foliage, in a spot whose very atmosphere breathes rest and quiet, stands one of Oakland's proudest institutions, Fabiola Hospital, an institution the necessity for whose existence was conceived by a noble woman since gone to her reward—an institution founded by women and managed since its inception wholly by women.

From the little one-story cottage on Market street, where with one nurse and a matron a little band of brave women opened to the needy sick Oakland's first free hospital nearly twenty-five years ago, it has grown steadily, and by no means slowly, to its present magnificent proportions. It has a staff of twenty attending and consulting physicians, including several specialists, and a resident physician. Instead of one nurse there is to-day a staff of forty men and women, principally the latter. Instead of a one-story cottage, capable of holding at the most a half-dozen patients, the present building can easily accommodate one hundred. During the year ending February 1, 1899, 579 patients were admitted and 619 treated. Of the 571 patients discharged during that year 471 were cured, 42 improved, 7 unimproved and 8 not treated. While nearly 80 per cent of its patients are natives of the United States, representatives of twenty-



cated many times, so that they can be had on call. In other words, we desire to so maintain the hospital that people will feel that they can rely on us and that Fabiola is a comfort in time of trouble.

"The only appeal I would make to Oakland's charitable and altruistic people is that they would come and see us and learn for themselves of the quality and quantity of work that is being done in Fabiola, the one institution in Oakland that is caring for the sick and destitute. No other appeal to it will be necessary. When criticism comes, when we are accused of 'not doing real charity work,' we only feel like saying, 'You don't know us. Some time you will have a friend here and then you will feel differently. The people who know us best like us best.'"

Altogether it must be conceded that Oakland has reason to be proud of and rejoice in its hospital started by and still under the sole management of its women. During its existence only six women have filled the president's chair—Mrs. Holten, Mrs. R. W. Kirkham, Mrs. Little, Mrs. Hinckley, Mrs. W. W. Standford (who has been a director throughout the entire period) and Mrs. John Tule, the incumbent. Its present vice presidents are Mrs. Remi Chabot, Mrs. J. A. Folger and Mrs. W. T. Standford.

These and a host of other self-sacrificing women have worked together in singular and pleasing harmony year after year with no bickerings or disagreements or petty jealousies. "No one can afford to be small," said one of them, "in such a large work—in the face of such great issues—those of life and death. It cannot do other than appeal to the best and highest in the characters of those associated in it. It appeals to the humanitarian instinct

DIET KITCHEN

GROUP OF NURSES



MEN'S WARD IN GENERAL HOSPITAL

PRIVATE ROOM IN GENERAL HOSPITAL



PRIVATE ROOM IN MATERNITY COTTAGE

seven different countries were in that year found within its walls, including those from Alaska, the Azore Islands, Hungary and Finland.

It has been said that as a rule women are more narrow than men. Perhaps, then, we must claim that the feminine management of this hospital is the exception that proves the rule. A very notable thing about it from the first has been the determination on the part of its management to maintain a broad policy. No nationality, no creed, no belief, no want of belief, bars the way of a patient who seeks admittance to Fabiola Hospital. Physicians of all schools, acknowledged as such by the State, and in good standing, are and have always been recognized on its staff.

"Indeed," said one of Fabiola's managers and earnest workers, "we never forget how loyally physicians of both schools have always stood by us, from Drs. Nicholson, Seifridge and others of the past generation, who worked with us harmoniously, cheerfully and gratuitously, just as Drs. Larkey, Chamberlain and the younger Drs. Nicholson and Seifridge and a score of them are doing to-day."

Fabiola has no assistance from State,

county or city, no endowment and only one endowed bed. It leads a sort of hand-to-mouth existence, meeting its expenses from month to month, always keeping out of debt, although faith is often the principal thing in its treasury. No one is ever turned away. Those who are unable to pay are received just as courteously and cheerfully as those who are. When the free beds are full extra ones are placed at the disposal of the needy as distressing cases come before the management.

A second class of patients are those who are able to pay something, but not hospital rates. Such are charged in accordance to their means, from \$1 a week upward. Those who have the ability pay regular hospital rates, no attempt being made to undercut the rates of other hospitals. Any profit arising from the care of such patients is applied to those who are unable to pay. No salaries are paid except to the regular staff of nurses and the usual hospital attendants.

A glance at the report of the treasurer, showing that over \$30,000 was raised and disbursed in a single year, will prove that these women have no mean financial ability. Between six and seven hundred dol-

lars is expended monthly on its free beds, not to speak of those who are unable to pay enough to cover the cost of their care.

In connection with the regular hospital work the association provides for a two and a half years' course of training for young women desirous of becoming professional nurses, admitting also a limited number of young men. These student nurses are given every opportunity and facility for receiving the best instruction, and are consequently held by the management to the highest ideals. Lectures, recitations and demonstrations, conducted by different members of the hospital staff of physicians, take place at regular intervals. It is a great safeguard to a community to feel that at any hour of the day or night they can summon to their own homes a nurse from Fabiola, one upon whom they can rely morally, physically and professionally.

If ever there was a practical illustration of the text, "There is that scattereth yet increaseth," it is to be found in the history of this hospital association. Almost a quarter of a century ago, when this subject of a free hospital for Oakland appealed to and lay most strongly on the heart of that benevolent and public spirited woman, the late Mrs. R. W. Kirkham, Oakland had no receiving hospital and the County Hospital then, as now, was twelve miles away. In her work among the poor Mrs. Kirkham constantly met with cases of acute disease which could not be carried to the County Hospital on account of its distance. She talked with physicians and prominent citizens, pleading, importuning, asserting Oakland's need for a free hospital, but was invariably met with the reply, "We sympathize with your wish and deplore our city's need of such an institution, but the time is not yet; Oakland is too small to support such an institution." She finally broached the subject to Dr. Nicholson, who laid it before his medical society, and a meeting was called which resulted in the organization of the Oakland Homeopathic Hospital and Dispensary Association.

Eighteen women pledged themselves to contribute \$2 each, and with this fund the hospital began its good work. Feasibly perhaps at first, like all newborn things, but in an incredibly short time it outgrew its swaddling clothes and moved to a two-story house on Nineteenth street, near Market. In less than three years it had again outgrown its quarters and with 75 cents in its treasury contracted to pay \$5000 for a house on Alice street. Enthusiasm always attends the start of a work, but it soon gets to be an old story and then the true test of courage is shown in keeping up one's enthusiasm to such a pitch that it can arouse it in

others. The ladies of the hospital association have always shown untiring energy and indomitable courage, but this undertaking to raise \$5000 with a reserve fund of 75 cents was nothing short of heroism. In less than three years, however, it was paid for, and larger accommodations were again imperative. They had no operating or surgical room—in fact, none of the conditions that are essential to a well appointed, working hospital.

In choosing the present site the ladies gave an evidence of their breadth, their business sagacity, their belief in Oakland's future, and their ability to see and discount that future. The irregular tract of wild land lying at the corner of Moss avenue and Broadway was unhesitatingly and almost unanimously pronounced by the assembly of physicians, ministers and business men called together to discuss the selection of a site to be ineligible on account of its distance from the center of the town. There seemed to be no alternative, however, and the present location was decided upon.

"But we must not claim too much for women," said Mrs. John Tule, the president, whom I had asked to tell me of the future work and prospects of Fabiola. "The men have always been the power behind the throne. No; we must allow that Fabiola is the work of both men and women—Oakland's work in short."

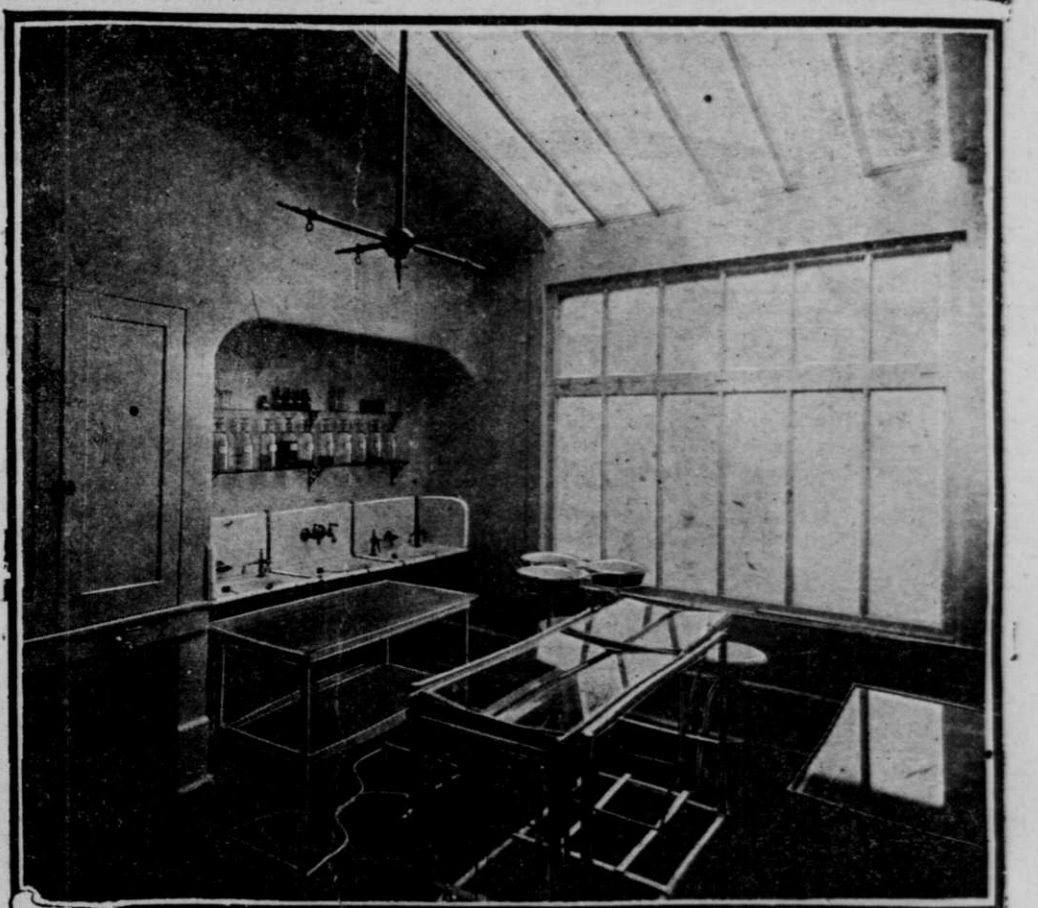
"It was Mr. Anthony Chabot who came to our assistance in the most important crisis by quietly purchasing the new site and sending the deed as a free gift to the ladies of the association. When the erection of a suitable building started us in the face Mr. Frederick Deiger started a building fund by depositing to our credit in the bank the generous sum of \$500. Mr. James A. Folger, Mr. T. S. Barker, Captain Asa Simpson, Mr. Francis Blake and many others contributed willingly and generously."

"And there is Derby day; that too is the work of a man," said with the ghost of a smile. There was just the faintest reflection of this smile on the lips of the gentle lady as she replied, "I don't know what we would have done without Derby day. We should have had to refuse cases and our work would have been sadly limited."

"Have you any plans regarding the work and future growth of the hospital?" I asked.

"We are just putting in a steam laundry, with all the latest and most approved facilities for washing and ironing, at a cost of \$3000, so that we shall rejoice in an abundance of clean linen. No one who is not initiated into the mysteries of its workings can imagine the demands made on the linen-room of a hospital."

"We have the plans drawn and will in a few days start on the erection of an 'isolation ward,' with necessary work-rooms attached for the sequestration of any contagious case that may develop in the hospital. This will add greatly to the feeling of security of the inmates. Our



OPERATING ROOM FOR MINOR SURGERY

work has been greatly strengthened and improved by separate children's and maternity departments; separate, although, of course, all of these departments are connected by corridors, in some instances seventy feet long. This new ward is to be called the 'John Archibald Annex,' its building fund of \$2000 having been donated by his niece, Miss Martin, as a memorial of her uncle.

"For six years we have maintained a district nurse, who goes to the sick poor, caring for them in their own homes. She is doing far-reaching work in her indirect lessons on sanitation, the care of the sick and the prevention of sickness. Physicians tell us they notice a great difference in the mode of living of the families with whom she has been."

"As to our future work, we have the feeling so strongly that Fabiola must be worthy of being regarded as a health station; a protection to the community, and members of which, at any hour, by stepping to their telephones and describing the case they wish cared for, can have a competent nurse quickly at hand, or an ambulance to transfer the patient to the hospital. With each year the public is beginning more and more to understand that homes are not hospitals and that their sick can be cared for with the right surroundings, as it is impossible to do at home. We will have such hospital appliances as crutches and stretchers dupli-

which all the world possesses in a greater or less degree—that is, it is more or less dormant and needing only to be roused."

Fabiola has no endowments and but one endowed bed, the gift of Mrs. R. W. Kirkham. Among the larger gifts of which it has been the recipient is a new, beautiful and thoroughly equipped ambulance from Mrs. J. A. Folger, one of its vice presidents. Once a year it has its annual donation reception, when the public is earnestly invited to call and to bring or send from their homes any trifle which they feel that they can spare, and few homes that cannot donate something if they only think of it—a glass of jelly, a kitchen utensil, a bundle of old linen or cotton or at least one article of partly worn clothing. Nothing comes amiss on this yearly donation day. Groceries, fruit and vegetables of all sorts, a pair of sheets, a blanket, and especially discarded underwear. Many of the poor come without even a change of underwear where so many changes are necessary. A young woman is constantly employed in the sewing-room in mending and patching, work of the good Samaritan in the Bible, but we can all give a little of our time and oil so that Fabiola may bind up the wounds of the suffering, remembering that inasmuch as we do it unto one of the least of these we do it unto Him.

ALICE CHITTENDEN.