

STRATHMORE HOSPITAL

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND.

A MODERN SURGICAL HOSPITAL.

A VISIT TO STRATHMORE.

THE writers of medical books tell us that forty years ago 90 per cent. of abdominal operations terminated fatally. To-day, in the hands of special operators, and under favourable conditions as to hygiene, this rate has been reduced to between 2½ per cent. and 3 per cent., but in operations by promiscuous operators, and under favourable conditions, the death rate is much higher, the average reaching something like 7 per cent. or 8 per cent. The reasons for this are two-fold. Firstly, there has been a great advance in surgical science or technique, and, secondly, there has been the use of aseptic precautions and surroundings. A marked advance in the direction of obtaining these conditions for favourable operations has been made in our midst by the provision of a building known as Strathmore Hospital, which has been fitted up with all the most improved and up-to-date aseptic appliances. Indeed, there is not, it is stated, in the Southern Hemisphere to-day any hospital possessing the same specially constructed rooms, etc., for the carrying out of the most delicate and important operations with the minimum of risk, an advantage which up to now it has

as far as possible the risk inseparable from every serious operation. With this view a specially constructed operating room has been built. This is 18ft square, lighted by windows having southern and eastern aspects. Each window is 8ft by 6ft, and in addition there are also three skylights. The great point in the arrangement of the room is the precaution taken to ensure the admission only of air which has been rendered aseptic, whereby a very great element of danger in operating is removed, and also the regulation of the temperature. In order to prevent the radiation of heat, the walls and ceilings of the operating room are of coke concrete, six inches in thickness in the walls, five in the floor, and three in the ceiling. The whole of this is covered with Portland cement, and, in addition, the interior of the room is lined with stout sheets of glass bedded in plaster of Paris and fixed firmly in position. The sheets come close to each other, so that there is but a little line in the solid glass surface, thus ensuring that there can be no lodgment of microbes. The windows are of double glass of extra thickness, and are fitted at the top and bottom of the sashes with air filters. They are on the counterbalancing principle, and the frames are fitted with two sheets of wire gauze, between which are placed layers of cotton wool for mechanically filtering the air with medical gauze to render it aseptic. The room is also fitted with a very effective ventilating chamber, from which the air passes into a heating receptacle behind a gas fire. By the opening or shutting of a ventilator the temperature of the room can be raised and lowered at pleasure, and a uniform temperature of 90 deg. and upwards can be

which will be used for sterilising instruments, the boiler of which is electro-plated and the table of glass. No mouldings of any kind have been used in fitting up the other rooms of the Hospital, the junctions between the walls and the floors being all convex. The windows throughout are all fitted with counterbalancing sashes, and so devised that fresh air is freely admitted and the vitiated withdrawn without the least draught being felt. For winter ventilation, and for the bathrooms and other offices, some of which are lined with glass in the manner described in the operating room, special provision has been made. Throughout the appliances are of the most modern type, combining everything that can be provided for the purpose of rendering operations absolutely safe, except in cases where the results are entirely beyond human control, and Christchurch can be congratulated on possessing an establishment quite unique in its completeness, one the like of which is not to be found to-day even in the large centres of population in the Old Country. The work has been carried out most successfully by the builder, Mr Harry, under the supervision of the architect, Mr S. Hurst-Seager.

At the annual meeting of the North Canterbury Hospital Board Mr W. Moor, chairman of the Board, in making his annual report referred to Strathmore Hospital in the following words:—'While on the subject of improvement I should like to say a few words on the great improvement in the surgical methods illustrated by Mrs T. Cochrane Brown's Private Hospital at Strathmore, Ferry Road. I recently visited this institution, of which Dr. Townend, one of our honorary consulting staff, is



F. W. Dutch, photo.

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not been possible to obtain, whatever amount of skill or expenditure of money was brought to bear. The completion of the building under notice marks a great advance in the direction of reducing the danger of operations to a minimum, and no doubt ere long the appliances described below will be introduced into our public institutions in the colony. As the matter is one of considerable public importance, a member of the staff of the *Press* paid a visit to the Hospital a few days ago, with a view to inspecting the special arrangements which have been made there. The building, which is situate on the Ferry road, just over the East Belt, contains thirty rooms, and has been very substantially constructed. It has been placed at the disposal of Dr. J. H. Townend by Mrs J. Cochrane Brown for use as a hospital, mainly, as will be seen, for surgical cases. In having the hospital built, Mrs Brown has been actuated chiefly by humanitarian motives, and the pecuniary considerations have in no way influenced her. She felt that there was real necessity for an institution where persons having to undergo surgical treatment should have the benefit of the best hygienic conditions, thus minimising

maintained if required. By means of the ventilating arrangements the air of the room can be changed, if necessary, ten times an hour. The skylights are fitted with spring blinds, so that the light can be regulated, and these blinds act between double glasses. The means of thoroughly and completely cleansing the walls, ceiling, and floor of the operating room, which is a very important matter, has been provided for very effectively. The floor is laid with a slight slope to one corner, where there is a discharging pipe. A hose is provided which can be fitted on to either hot or cold water, and a copious and thorough drenching of all parts of the room can thus be given. The furniture of the room is all aseptic, and has been specially imported from Messrs Richard Knyn and Co., New York. The operating-table is from the design of Dr. Edelnois, and consists of three plates of polished French glass, set in iron frames. The table is also fitted with rubber casters, and is eminently fitted for laparotomy and gynaecological work, as well as all kinds of general operations. A steriliser is provided, in which the clothes worn by the doctors and the nurses' dresses will be sterilised. There is also a smaller one

medical officer, and was greatly impressed with the advantages of the modern, scientific, aseptic surgery practised there. The precautions taken against danger to the patients operated upon from infection by germs are really wonderful, and aseptic surgery as there practised has been the means of saving many lives, which under the old state of things would certainly have been lost. This is especially true in regard to abdominal surgery in which operations can now be safely performed, which a few years ago would almost certainly have resulted fatally. The public undoubtedly owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Townend for having introduced aseptic surgery, which will doubtless be the means of saving hundreds of lives, for now it has been begun in Christchurch it is sure to be taken up elsewhere in the colony. I look upon this matter as of so much importance that I consider that all public hospitals in the various centres should send representatives to Strathmore to familiarise themselves with the methods there followed, and that it should be made incumbent on the hospital authorities in each large centre to provide an institution conducted on similar lines. It would be well if the minute