

THE NEW DENTAL HOSPITAL.

A SPLENDID INSTITUTION.

RAPID INCREASE IN DAILY PATIENTS.

HOW THE NEEDY ARE HELPED.

The antipathy of patients to the filling of teeth is being overcome by the Dental Hospital, which is doing excellent work in its new home on Frome-road. The poorest can obtain treatment instead of paying a shilling for the privilege of losing a tooth that could and should be saved. One aim of the hospital is to convince the public that if care is exercised to keep teeth sound until the age of 25, they should last a lifetime. It is sternly opposed to indiscriminate extractions.

Sound teeth are not only a source of personal satisfaction, but an asset to the community. Medical men have been insisting on this for years, and have expressed the opinion that it is no wonder the hospitals are full of people suffering from indigestion, or ills arising from it, when the public pays so little attention to the problem of keeping its teeth in good order.

They are not the only professional men, however, who have interested themselves in the question. For the best part of 20 years South Australia's leading dentists have advised the establishment of a hospital at which the science of dentistry could be studied and treatment provided in cases where finance does not permit the sufferer to consult a specialist. Governments are notoriously hard to move. For years the enthusiasts simply beat the air; then Sir Joseph Verco became interested. Although not a dental surgeon, he realised the importance of the issue, and to his advocacy may be attributed the wise decision of the British Red Cross Society to grant £15,000 to found the institution, which has been the dream for so many years of prominent members of the dental profession.

With this help a supplementary Government grant of £10,000 followed as a matter of course. Eighteen months ago the hospital was established in the Old Exhibition Building, than which no more unsuitable location could be imagined, but now it is housed in a modern and comfortable pile of its own, facing Frome-road, where it is carrying on excellent work as a department of the Adelaide General Hospital.

A Rush of Applicants.

The innovation gained ground quickly. Beginning with an average of nine patients daily it worked up to an average of 40 before the transfer to the new building took place this month. Since then as many as a hundred have called in one day. Next week the staff will be increased, and further additions of appliances and attendants in all branches will be inevitable as the public secures a wider

knowledge of the objects of the hospital and its non-prohibitive charges.

It does not aim at jeopardising the livelihood of any practising dentist. What it desires is to prevent people from parting with their teeth at a shilling per extraction

where this is a hardship, but actual freedom from payment is rare.

It will be seen, therefore, that the hospital in no way competes with those who have spent many years and much money in acquiring a knowledge of the profession. The classes treated at Frome-road are those whose financial limit in regard to an aching tooth is a shilling to pull

age. Most of the decay takes place then, before young people settle down to stolid citizens of regular habits. It is the "eat, drink, and be merry time," when the future can take care of itself and the remedy for an aching tooth is a flourish of "painless" forceps.

If a man is mouth-whole at 25 he is pretty sure to remain so up to and perhaps well beyond 60. The youngsters are the ones the hospital wants to see attended to, and all mothers and fathers going to the hospital are to see that the teeth of their children remain sound up to this "immunity" age. There is no excuse for neglect, as Dr. Gertrude Halley attends at the schools and notifies parents in cases where teeth should be attended to. The hospital also sends out circulars to parents, and through the medium of the "Children's Hour" every effort is made to let the people know the institution exists. Its work covers all State children, reformatories and industrial schools, Repatriation Department, and the Soldiers' Fund. Even the Barwell boys come within its purview, and there is a growing influx from the country. The difficulty is to cope with the country cases. Unless many of them stay in town for a few days it is impossible to complete the work. A number think all that is necessary can be done in a few hours. To save disappointment, it is suggested that country patients should advise when they are coming, so that arrangements can be made for prompt attention.

Correcting Wrong Notions.

Although it has been operating for such a short period, the hospital has gone far towards breaking down the antipathy of the public with respect to filling teeth. The people are being convinced that an aching tooth is not necessarily a bad one, and it is rare now for patients to refuse to allow them to be saved. It is a shock to many to find that the hospital refuses to indulge their whims for indiscriminate tooth-pulling. In correcting this wrong

because they cannot afford to have them attended to properly.

Objects that follow as a natural corollary are the education of the public on dental matters, and as a result the promotion of health generally. Incidentally the hospital will be an excellent training ground for the profession. The treatment, except in special cases, is not free. There is a definite schedule of maximum fees, and either the maximum or some portion of it is charged if the patient is admitted to treatment.

Not for the Rich.

The maximum rate is about half that charged by outside dentists. Not all, however, are eligible to take advantage of the hospital. When applications are made there are exhaustive enquiries regarding the financial position of those requesting treatment, and if it is considered that they can afford to pay outside fees they are not admitted. Where artificial teeth are required the actual cost of the plates must be met. There may be instances

it out. They cannot afford the minimum of 7/6 to fill a cavity. In this way the hospital deals with those never likely to become patients of the doctors on North-terrace and elsewhere.

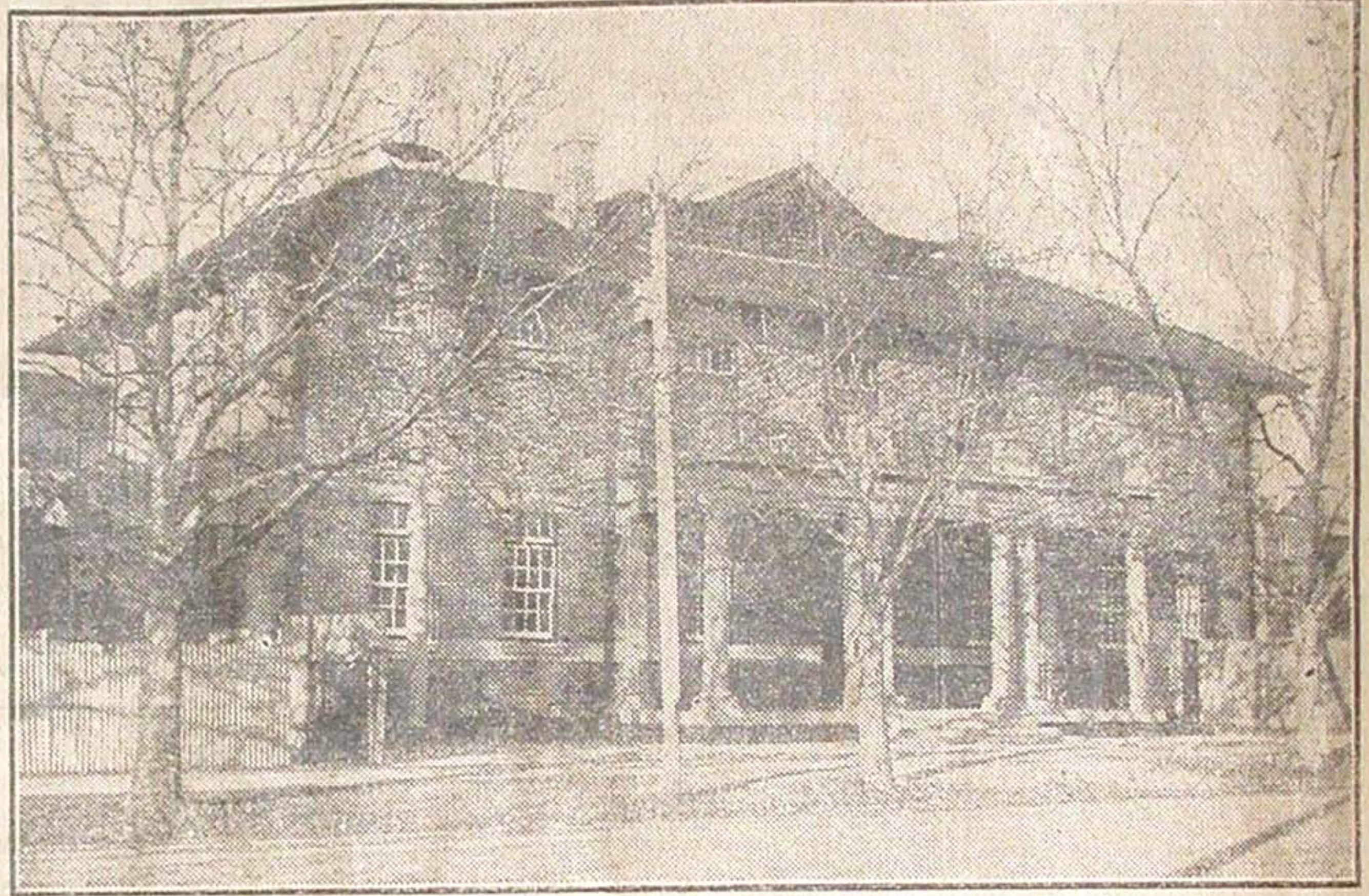
At first it was the working man and his family getting from £3 to £4 10/ a week who braved the dustheap styled the Old Exhibition grounds and knocked at the Dental Hospital door. Now that the new building has been completed the clerk with an extensive family and a modest income is finding his way to its portals. In this manner the hospital is reaching out to a large, hardworking, and valuable class, the dental health of whose children has an undoubted bearing on the State's prosperity and progress.

The Age of Immunity.

The result is that nobody would sacrifice a tooth wantonly. Apart from its practical operations, the hospital is doing good service in teaching the people to take care of their teeth.

What may be termed the dental danger period is up to 25 years of

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Front View of the Building.

THE OPERATING ROOM.



Patients Under Treatment.