



True Heart Lodge Bishopstone 1887

Hospital Sunday

For the laudable object of assisting in the erection of the proposed Victoria Hospital at Swindon, a Hospital Sunday was held on Lord's Day last at Bishopstone, and proved a thorough success, and was a presagement for the same becoming an annual occurrence; we trust it will. The question of having a Hospital Sunday at Bishopstone originated in the "Loyal Rue heart" Lodge of Oddfellows. It having been mooted by one or two individuals that such a thing could be done, the matter was taken up by the whole of the members. The worthy Vicar of the parish, the Rev. H. Ault, when asked to assist, most readily consented, and the whole parish fell in with the idea, and Sunday last was the day appointed. Although the overhanging clouds in the early part of the day foretold a downfall, yet this passed off to some other part, and the day turned out to be a splendid one.

The spectacular result of the affair was no doubt due to the energy put forth by the committee appointed to make the necessary arrangements. These consisted of Messrs. J. and R. Povey for Bishopstone and Mr. A. Ball for the parish of Ashbury. The Swindon Town Band having volunteered to give their services, they proceeded to Ashbury in brakes where they met the various friendly associations in the district, the starting place being near the "Watercross beds". The procession was formed at 1.30, headed of course, by the band. After perambulating Ashbury, the procession wended its way through Idstone to Bishopstone. The trustees of the "True Heart" Lodge of Oddfellows, A. Ball, J. Povey, and Philip Redford preceded the band, and afterwards came a large number of the members of the above named lodge, followed by representatives of the Bishopstone Church School Friendly Society, the "Harrow Inn Benefit Society", Wanborough, the lodge of Oddfellows for Wanborough, also representatives from the "Vale of White Horse" Court of Foresters, at Shrivenham, and from Court "Pride of Swindon", and various other Courts and Lodges. The D.S. Of the Highworth District Bro. T. H. Hill, was also present to represent the Highworth Lodge of Oddfellows, which was the mother lodge to the Bishopstone "True Hearts". No doubt many others would have been present from Highworth but for the fact that they in that town were celebrating their Hospital Sunday also on the same day. However, the muster at Bishopstone was a good one, numbering upwards of 300. All the members of the different societies were wearing the various regalia of their Order.

Appeals were made contributions towards the object, the following brethren being appointed to collect :- Representing Bishopstone – Bros. D. Titchener and R. Povey; Ashbury – Bros. J. White, R. Taylor, and G. Simpson.

After parading Bishopstone and soliciting alms, the members proceeded to "Townsend's Close" a meadow pleasantly situated, and kindly lent by Mr. T. Hickman for the occasion. Here a special service was held, being conducted by the Rev. H. Ault, vicar of the parish, and the Rev. H. Miller, vicar of Ashbury. Special

appropriate hymns were sung, these being 367, 368 and 365 (Hymns A. and H.). The special Psalm was the The church choir (surpliced) was in attendance, and greatly assisted in the singing. Mr. J. Wrigley presiding at the organ, which had been removed from the church for the purpose. The Swindon Town Band also accompanied in the singing of hymns. The prayers were intoned by the Rev. H. Miller. An excellent sermon was preached by the Rev. H. Ault, to the congregation which had assembled, and numbered very short of 600 persons. The rev. gentleman took for his text, the 8th chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, and the first part of the 2nd verse, "I have compassion on the multitude". Compassion, he said was one of the golden links which bound our most holy Redeemer to ourselves. Compassion had by magnetic force brought them and him together that day, to give offering first of all to God, and secondly to the Swindon Victoria Hospital, that in some measure they might lessen the suffering from the ills which human flesh was heir to. They should all have compassion one with another – compassion as shown by our Saviour Jesus Christ. They were come together that day first of all to offer God their hearty thanks for being possessed with excellent health and strength. Of what use, he asked, were we unless we enjoyed good health?. What was learning, what was social rank, what was any position or attainment in life unless they had health and strength to enjoy them. Most of them before him that day were in health, but there were innumerable persons in hospital wards sufferers in pain. He would appeal to those who were well and strong and did not know what sickness was, to show as Christ did when he came into the world, that they cared for the souls of others. They should that afternoon render Him thanks for giving the His inestimable gift – that of health and strength. And to those who, like himself, had had to pass through the valley of suffering, and had to lie on a bed of sickness, he also appealed. To each and everyone he appealed to show their kindness by helping on the good work which had just been inaugurated in their nearest market town of Swindon. All the villages around should have a lively interest in that noble institution. He hoped it would not fall to the lot of many to need such, but perchance some parishioner in Bishopstone or Ashbury might at some time or other need the assistance of such a hospital. As God had given them so they should give. It was to give what they could toward that worthy object of assisting this hospital that they were there gathered together. But perhaps there were some who had come for curiosity. Well, he did not mind friends coming to church even for curiosity. They might come because it was some special service, or because a certain person was preaching, or simply for fashion. But God saw their minds, and He sent His Holy gospel home to his hearts, and they left the service better than they came to it. If there were any present that day who had come for curiosity, might God bring his humble words home to them and make them not only to assist this new hospital, but to love God and go to Him, and to make the world better by their presence. Let them remember that selfishness was antagonistic to God, and to any good work. Let them remember the words of one of our great men : "A man may breathe, but never live, that all receive, but nothing give". Some there were, no doubt, before him that day who might not have been inside a hospital.. Let him tell them a few of the benefits of such. There were scientific appliances, there was a good physical medical staff. Then there was a chaplain, who went day by day to visit the sick and preach to them. They had also a regular and prescribed diet, and all the knowledge which medical men could bring to bear upon the cases.

The rev. gentleman went on to enumerate all the blessings and advantages derived from a hospital, and all these, he said, could not be obtained in a private home, where there was not sufficient scope for it. He would ask them all in the name of God and in the name of those who would receive assistance from such a hospital to render what aid they could.

Proceeding, Mr. Ault observed that he had that morning received a letter from the secretary to the Swindon Victoria Hospital Committee, giving some statistics as to the cost of building and maintaining the hospital, and he would now repeat it to them. In the first place, the building would cost £1,500 for erection. Towards that sum only £1,000 had as yet been subscribed, so that there was £400 still required. Then there would be a sum required for furnishing, and supplying a number of beds. At first there would be 10 beds, and these would cost from £35 to £40 each per annum to maintain. When the money came in sufficiently there would be 30 beds for the convenience of patients. In conclusion, the rev. gentleman said he must not let them part that afternoon without mentioning how much he was indebted to the local benefit societies for initiating that Hospital Sunday. Then he was asked to preach on that occasion, he gave his ready consent. He was always willing to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He felt sure that that service would be only the first of a series. He trusted that he might be spared to be with them next year when he was sure they would have another Hospital Sunday. Well, he had spoken to them of the help to their

bodies, and now let him speak to them of Christ as the help to their souls. Let him give them the words of a great man to take home : "Find out men's wants and will; then give yourselves to that. All joys grow less on earth, but the joy of doing kindness". Might God give each on of them a willing heart, and show them His blessing at that time and always, for the sake of His son Jesus Christ.

Hymn 365, "O Lord of heaven and earth and sea!, was sung, and a collection made by the churchwardens on behalf of the hospital fund. The Vicar, in the name of those present, thanked the members of the band for giving their valuable services that day, remarking that they had greatly assisted in the musical portion of the service. The band performed a capital selection of sacred music of an hour's duration in the field, which was greatly appreciated. The members of the band then proceeded to the club room of the "True Heart" Lodge of Oddfellows, where they were provided, through the liberality of the members of the club, with an excellent tea previous to returning home, the same being supplied by Host and Hostess Westell.

At the evening service at the parish church, the Rev. H. Ault again preached, delivering a capital discourse from the words in the 22nd verse of the 20th chapter of St. Mark's gospel : "Are ye able . . . We are able". Processional and recessional hymns were sung, and at the close an offertory was taken on behalf of the Swindon Hospital. The collections throughout the day amounted to £11 17s. 6d. and were made up as follows : Collected at the afternoon and evening church services, £6 10s.; collected in boxes by members while processioning the villages, £5 7s 6d., making up the above total of £11 17s. 6d. Of this 25s. has been paid as expenses of brake for conveyance of band, and the balance of £10 12s 6d. has been paid into bank to the credit of the hospital. There were 865 coins in the collection.

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