

**PROCEEDINGS AT THE DEDICATION OF THE
CITY HOSPITAL: WITH THE ACT OF THE
LEGISLATURE, ORDINANCES OF THE CITY
COUNCIL, RULES AND ORDERS OF THE
TRUSTEES, RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE
HOSPITAL, PLANS OF THE BUILDING, ETC., ETC**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649476480

Proceedings at the Dedication of the City Hospital: With the Act of the Legislature, Ordinances of the City Council, Rules and Orders of the Trustees, Rules and Regulations of the Hospital, Plans of the Building, Etc., Etc by Various

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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VARIOUS

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AT THE

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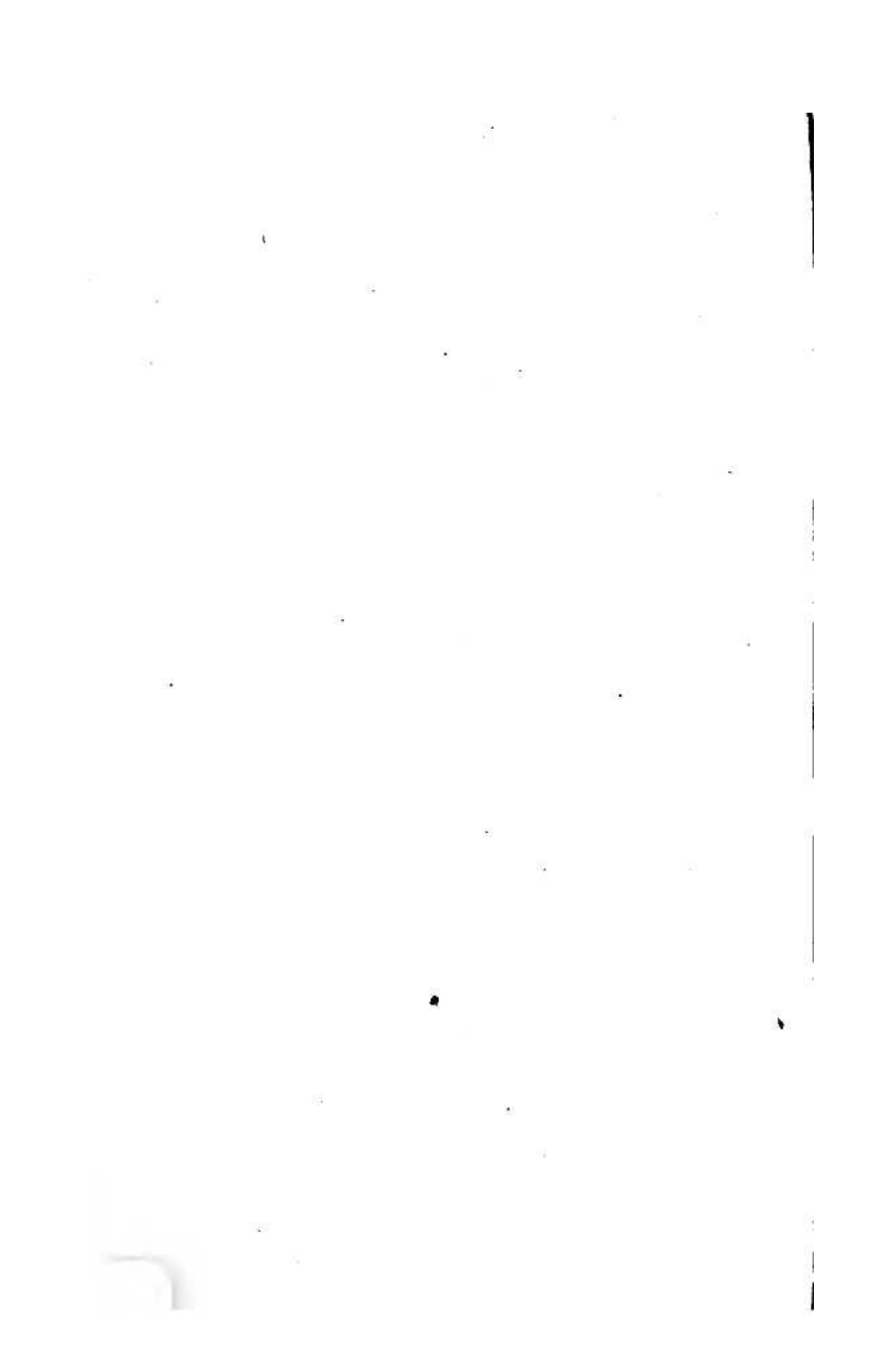


BOSTON:

J. E. FARWELL & COMPANY, PRINTERS TO THE CITY,

37 CORNHILL STREET.

1865.



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P R E F A C E .

As early as the year 1849, before the cholera, then epidemic, had entirely disappeared, the expediency of establishing a City Hospital was mooted; and a Committee of the City Council reported favorably upon a project of continuing the Fort Hill Hospital, as a means of alleviating the pains of "those who suffer in their uncomfortable and often miserable homes when sick," but who could not enter the Massachusetts General Hospital, and who would not go to the almshouse. The principal physicians of the city gave their countenance to this project as a temporary expedient, expressing the hope that some more adequate and comprehensive plan might be speedily adopted; and one of their number suggested a reservation of the city's land with a view to the erection of a Hospital worthy of the city. Not even this temporary hospital was established, however; for although the then Board of Aldermen passed the necessary order, the Common Council rejected it.

- No further steps were taken towards establishing a City Hospital till the year 1856, when petitions were signed generally by the medical faculty and officers of the local charitable associations, urging the city to establish a Hospital. These papers were communicated to the Council of 1857, by Hon. Alexander H. Rice, then Mayor, who strongly urged the "need of a free Hospital within the limits of the city," for the reception of those plunged into poverty by sickness or sudden reverses, who ought not to be sent to the almshouse, and for the destitute stranger and others requiring temporary relief and care. The language used by Mayor Rice would seem to convey the idea of establishing a purely "free" Hospital, and as that epithet was so often applied to the projected institution, and has been even to the one now in operation, it may be well to quote from the able report made by the special Committee on that portion of Mayor Rice's address relating to the Hospital, their suggestions as to the character desirable for a City Hospital, especially as they coincide with the present actual regulations of the Institution: —

* * * * * With this explanation of the course adopted by the Committee, we will first consider the object of the proposed Hospital. This can only be stated in general terms, because its arrangements, extent, and details must necessarily be modified according to circumstances. It is, however, proper to state that the term, "City Hospital," would

probably better express the character and design of the proposed institution than "Free Hospital;" since it appears from the address of the Mayor, and from the general evidence in favor of this establishment, that while its benefits are intended to be free to those persons of temperate and industrious habits, who by sickness or accident require that care and attention for which they are unable to pay, yet where there is the ability, there is no reason why a just and proper amount should not be received, to aid in meeting the expenses of the Hospital. And we have no doubt that many of the patients or their friends, would prefer to pay something, in proportion to their means, to prevent the feeling that they were the objects of public charity. There is no class in the community in which this sentiment or desire of independence is so strong as among that class for whose special benefit this Hospital is intended: and it is one which, as the great barrier to pauperism, cannot be too highly commended and encouraged.

Hence we would not have this a Hospital for the reception of the degraded victims of vice and intemperance, or a home for the hopeless pauper; but we would have it regarded as an asylum for the industrious and honest mechanic and laborer, who by sudden injury or disease is temporarily prevented from laboring for the support of himself and family; and who, by proper care and medical treatment, may have his sufferings alleviated, and be sooner restored to his health and his family, and enabled to resume his labor. We would have it a home, to which the respectable domestic may be sent when struck down by sickness, whose attic chambers cannot be made comfortable, and who cannot receive the requisite attendance, however well disposed may be the family in which she resides. We would open its doors to the stranger overtaken by disease, when absent from friends and home, and to all others among the various classes of society who in sickness require that comfort and medical advice which their means and homes cannot afford."