

HEALTH & LIVING

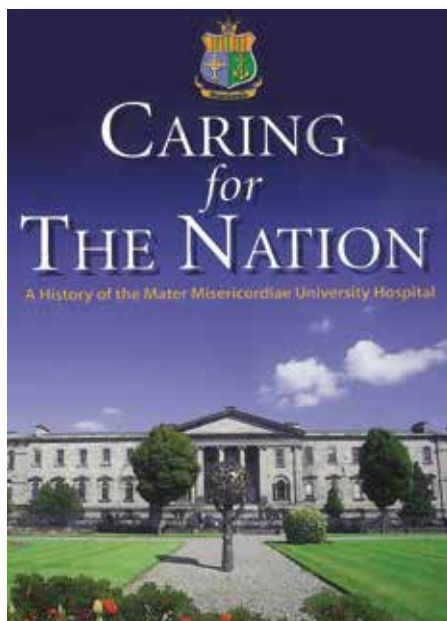
Caring for a troubled nation

SOCIALLY and politically, Dublin in the 1860s was a wretched place. It was a city of poverty, disease and death. Stifled by economic stagnation and political dependence on its imperial master, about half the population of the 'second city of the empire' lived in poverty, the type of abject economic and social squalor that can only be imagined as we obsess over the relatively minor deprivations of the current recession.

In the second half of the 19th century, epidemics of cholera, smallpox and typhoid were frequent in Ireland. The hospitals that had developed in Dublin up to then were far removed from the high-tech healthcare centres of today. They were places where the poor went to die, and frequently they didn't want them, particularly if they had infectious diseases.

The wealthier stayed away from hospitals, choosing instead to be treated at home by their personal physicians.

Sr Eugene Nolan's history of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital provides this sobering 19th century vignette: "... (Dublin) suffered from poor sanitation and regular outbreaks of disease. It had no formal water supply and sewage made it way among



the streets to the River Liffey, which often had corpses floating in it, because access to cemeteries was too expensive."

It was against this background that the original vision of Catherine McAuley was realised and the Mater opened its doors 152 years ago. The facilities, although primitive by today's standards, were first

regarded by some as being too luxurious for the poor – for example the use of hair, instead of the traditional straw mattresses.

Sr Eugene's lavishly-illustrated history outlines how the Mater developed in tandem with the often troubled history of the Irish State and the rapid expansion in medical knowledge, technology and education over the past century and a half.

The book looks at how the Mater dealt with World War One, the struggle for independence, the 'troubles', and the Stardust fire. It also outlines how the Mater pioneered treatment in areas such as heart surgery and examines the history of nursing and nurse education at the hospital.

One theme throughout the book is the tension between the Mater's desire to maintain its independence and ethos as a voluntary institution in the face of increasing State funding and regulation.

Caring for the Nation is a fascinating read for anyone interested in Irish medical and nursing history.

- Niall Hunter

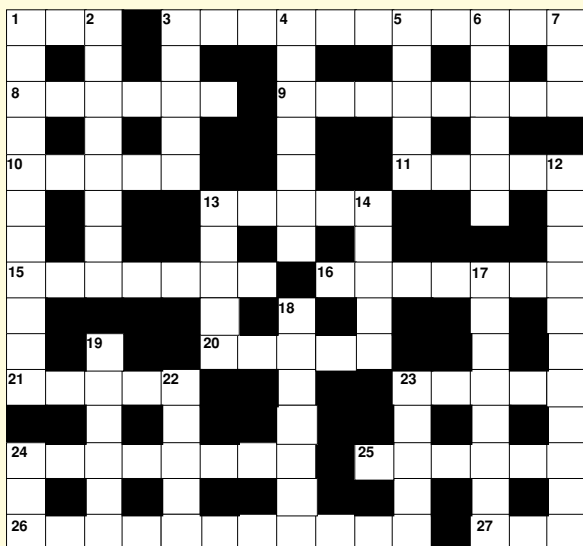
Caring for the Nation by Sr Eugene Nolan RSM, published by Gill & Macmillan. ISBN 978-0-7171-57808 RRP €29.99

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Across

1. Resin. (3)
3. Broke-stoned again? Made an enemy so. (11)
8. Violet-blue colour. (6)
9. A camping mix-up for the military undertaking. (8)
10. Reassurance, assuage. (5)
11. Telling fibs. (5)
13. Lid. (5)
15. Adam or Eve's original clothing. (3,4)
16. Leave an article in front of a Cork town. (7)
20. Giant of Greek mythology, such as Atlas. (5)
21. Nimble. (5)
23. Stag movie - from Disney! (5)
24. Game not found in well-insulated homes? (8)
25. Wound or shock caused by a sudden injury. (6)
26. Congenital condition characterised by a fissure in the roof of the mouth. (5,6)
27. English river that is vexed at heart. (3)

Down

1. Congenital neural tube defect. (5,6)
2. Walking in shallow water. (8)
3. Irate. (5)
4. It's used as a pizza topping? That's a little fishy! (7)
5. Country where the plane crashed. (5)
6. Spectre. (6)
7. Noise. (3)
12. A finish with a flourish gets a thousand part of a fish with beer! (5,6)
13. Shoreline. (5)
14. Bird often seen with Batman. (5)
17. This sleepy creature might disturb a used room. (8)
18. Implement. (7)
19. Buccaneer. (6)
22. The number of pints in a gallon. (5)
23. The canal boat can smash a berg. (5)
24. Bespectacled Disney dwarf. (3)

Solutions to October crossword:

Across: 1. Sod 3. Baby bouncer
8. Always 9. Adhesive 10. Bilge
11. Dying 13. Field 15. Bedside
manner 16. Scalpel 20. Drums
21. Stool 23. Blimp 24. Rejected
26. Demonstrate 27. Sty

Down: 1. Soap bubbles 2. Download
3. Boyne 4. Yearned 5. Upend
6. Clinic 7. Rue 12. Guilty party
13. Faded 14. Docks 17. Patients
18. Builder 19. Logjam 22. Lucan
23. Brace 24. Red

The winner of the
October crossword is:
Bridgid Callaghan
from
Mountmellick,
County Laois

Name:
Address:
.....
.....

The prize will go to the first all correct entry opened.

Closing date: Monday, November 18, 2013

Post your entry to: Crossword Competition,

The World of Irish Nursing, MedMedia Publications, 25 Adelaide Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin