

LOOKING BACK (To our hospital jubilee)

Vladimír Panoušek



*Dr. Vladimír Panoušek *1936*

During the last November we recalled the 70th anniversary of opening the new public hospital in Hradec Králové, the institution that subsequently has become a basis for the University Hospital of the new local Medical Faculty. Since that anniversary there has already elapsed more than half a year and today's reminder may thus be taken for rather delayed. Nevertheless, the purport of this article is not only to commemorate the very famous day when the long lasting desire of doctors and various men of light and learning of Hradec Králové came to its fulfilment. I would like to demonstrate also all the efforts, which had preceded this hospital creation.

The care for human health was developing during the history only very slowly. Things that we nowadays consider for quite natural ones were neither dreamed of for many centuries. Today's hospitals were preceded in the Middle Ages, as well as even for a long part of the New Ages, by so called sick houses. Their tasks did not lie in the proper treatment yet; they rather represented mere shelters for old and sick people. The first such sick houses were established by Church and consisted mostly from very modest institutions, as proved by the photograph of Jan Smit that documents the by a miracle preserved small baroque sick house in Rabštejn upon Střela, erected most probably by Servits in the 18th century.

Also in Hradec Králové and its close vicinity such sick houses arose and disappeared again. The existence of the first one, established most probably as soon as in the 13th century by the commend (monasterial settlement) of German Sick House Brethren, German Knights of the Cross, is

documented in written from the year 1362. Another sick house was founded in the middle of the 14th century at Saint Anna's Church. By the end of 14th century the magistrate and aldermen together with the parish priest from Holy Ghost founded a big sick house with the St. Anthony Church on the riverside of Orlice. All these sick houses came to a lot of harm during the Hussite wars. That big one at Orlice river ceased to exist during the fortification works in Hradec Králové. Besides the above mentioned sick houses for old and sick people also the special houses for leprous, and later on also for plague and cholera patients were established during the Middle Ages.

As late as by the end of the 18th and beginning of 19th centuries the character of hospitals in this country, as well as in all over Central Europe, started changing into the today's form of existence. In Hradec Králové, that was in the year 1765 by the decision of Emperor Joseph the 2nd converted into the military fortified town, the situation was rather difficult. Vast suburbs had been taken down and the historical town centre on the hill above the rivers Labe and Orlice confluence were squeezed by the star-shaped walls. The whole city became a bizzare housing estate with continuing existence of offices, trades, church and school institutions, and, above all, housing the strong military garrison. It was quite natural then, that at first the military hospital



*Baroque sick house in Rabštejn upon Střela.
Picture taken by Jan Smit.*



*From the old Hradec Králové.
Watercolour by Jindra Vlček (1912).*

was founded and only besides it (in the year 1798) there existed only one room for poor civilians. As late as in 1857, soon after Hradec Králové was avowed to be independent town again, the governor declared the town hospital as the general treating institution and a real history of hospitals in Hradec Králové began. In the year 1867 the first public town hospital with thirty beds was organized in the house formerly lived in by the commander of the fortification. Soon after this, in 1875, this hospital was disestablished from financial reasons. Sick people took refuge mostly in the county hospital in Nechanice, constructed in the year 1872.

Even after dissolving the fortress headquarters in 1858, when also the building limitations within the fortress area were abolished, town Hradec Králové stayed still restricted by its walls. This was caused by executives' fear of costs connected with demolishing the fortification walls. Only a narrow strip of land around the historical centre was assigned for spreading the town. Here there were constructed the gasworks (1869), waterworks (1872), realschool building (1874), and finally also the new public hospital. This hospital, named after Archduchess Elizabeth, was opened in 1887. It contained 74 beds and the hospital care was entrusted to Grey Nuns of Saint Francis Seraphim Order. Doctor Josef Potoček was introduced as the first hospital head.

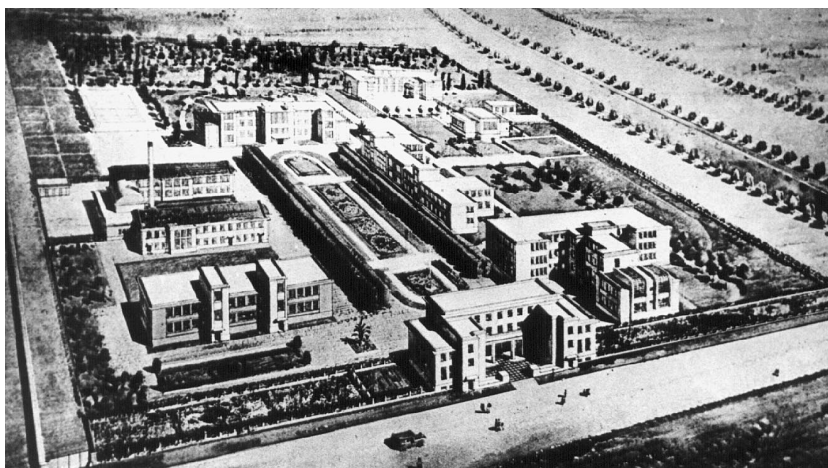
This hospital popularity grew quickly, especially when in 1896 dr. Otokar Klumpar became its head. In the recollection from the year 1928 head physician doctor Bedřich Honzák wrote about him: „Dr. Klumpar was of a peculiar individuality. He impressed both by his figure and behaviour. As a physician he brought luckily together all the disciplines necessary for a country hospital. Thanks to his education being an excellent obstetrician, he successfully performed also the necessary surgical operations, even the laparotomies, at that having mastered exceedingly well also diagnostics and treatment of internal diseases.“ What dr. Honzák has not actually remarked and has not even considered worth mentioning, as he also was not finding his own role in the medical field only, was the fact that dr. Klumpar represented not only an enthusiast physician but also a devoted communal politician and an ardent organizer of cultural activities. He belonged to the closest associates of legendary Hradec Králové burgermeister František Ulrich, doctor of law, who had been standing at the

head of the town since 1895 till 1929. That was a period of time when this town in unprecedented manner started disencumbering from stringent fortification walls. Thanks to doctor Klumpar an independent opthalmological department was established in the hospital. When a former infectious house standing in close vicinity was leased from the town, hospital's capacity grew and reached more than 100 beds.

At the beginning of the year 1906 doctor Klumpar resigned and was replaced by dr. Bedřich Honzák, an excellent surgeon, disciple of professors Maydl and Pawlik. Nevertheless, by that time the building of Archduchess Elizabeth General public hospital did not suffice any more for the ever growing number of patients. Also the hygienic situation was disastrous. For doctor Honzák this all ment that apart from the difficulties with securing the hospital running he also had to keep a day-to-day fight with the small-minded representatives of craftsmen and tradesmen



Former Archduchess Elizabeth's hospital after reconstruction in the years 1922-23.



Lay-out of the new hospital (1925).

in the town local authority who feared the high costs to be paid for a new hospital construction. This fight reached its peak in 1911 when in the paper „Čas“ the Czech poet and general of medical service Josef Svatopluk Machar published a critical column concerning the hospital in Hradec Králové. In his depiction of painful situation he claimed this hospital to be a jug. Then also the editors of paper „Kraj královehradecký“ joined in criticism and accused dr. Bedřich Honzák of purposeful overcrowding the hospital to enforce building of a new „expensive“ one. In this mediumistic battle doctor Honzák defended himself by the article „The third jug of Hradec Králové“, which was published in paper „Ratibor“ on November the 18th, 1911. Here he truthfully described a gloomy state of a hospital building, including the incongenial space and hygienic conditions in which not only the patients but also the hospital staff members had to live. He also stressed that both the town and county were of an urgent need of a new hospital

and that even the town health committee decided to appeal to a town counsel for conveying proper lot to a county for building a new hospital.

Unfortunately, there came the First World War and the idea of constructing a new hospital had to be postponed for several years. Nevertheless, even after the war ended and Czechoslovak Republic was created, the building had to be delayed due to the lack of finances. That was why in the years 1922 - 1923 the old pavilion was reconstructed and modernized and one more storey was added to the original structure. Only in the year 1925 it was finally decided to build up a new hospital and in Spring 1926 the construction works began. Necessary lands were provided by the town. From this view it should be admitted that previous curtailment of the town showed to be beneficial as the empty area designed for the construction was close to the town centre.

A modern pavilion type hospital, consisted of the surgical and gynaecological pavilion, internal diseases pavilion,

double-pavilion with ophtalmological and otolaryngological departments, pavilion for contagious diseases, dissection lab, administration and technical buildings, was build under the design of Prague architect B.A. Adámek MSc by Hradec Králové construction firm Fňouk and Komárek MSc. This hospital initially reckoned with 360 beds. New County general public hospital was ceremonially opened on the 4th of November 1928 and its running started only few days later - on the 12th November. When opened this hospital had six departments, but already in the year 1928, when gynaecology-obstetrics became independent, number of departments grew to seven. Besides the senior consultants - heads of departments - the hospital had eight more established positions for housemen and externs. The staff included also 35 nurses and one laboratory technician.

From the very beginning this hospital roused a concern of experts, as well as of the general public, not only for its modern construction conception but also for the at that time wide medical branches division. On May the 24th 1929 it was even visited by the first president of Czechoslovak Republic Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk.

An interest of both the professional and general public in a new hospital in Hradec Králové went on. While at the beginning it was aimed above all at the construction aspect and buildings equipment, it very soon started concent-



Entrtence gate of the new hospital (1928).

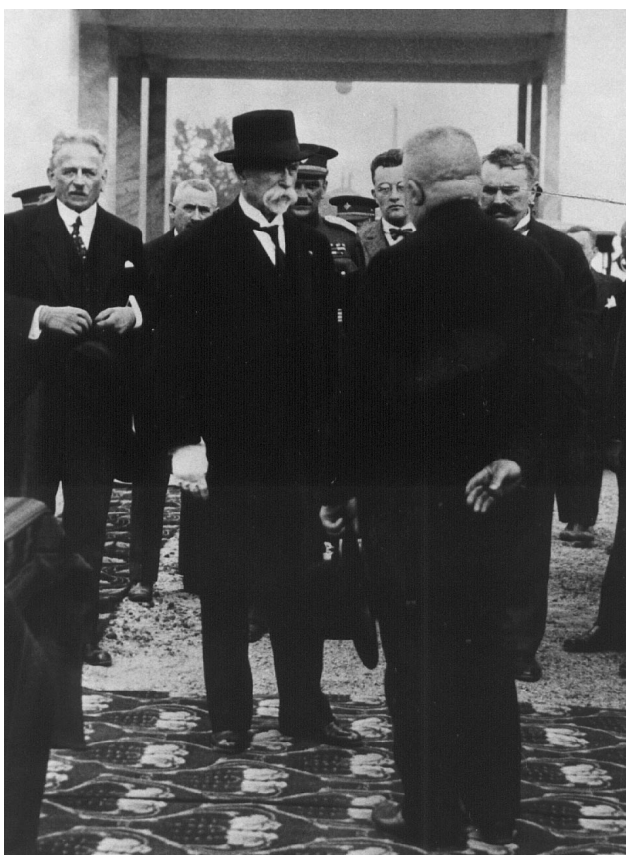


Double-pavilion of otolaryngological and ophtalmological departments.

rating on the performance and faculties of its doctors. Doctor Honzák brought the surgery on a very high level and the same also went for other heads of departments - doctor Ladislav Tvrzský in the internal department, dr. Josef Saska on the ophtalmology, dr. Václav Tesař on otolaryngology, dr. Josef Jung on the department of gynaecology and obstetrics, and dr. Otokar Müller who led the department of radiology. Head of dissection lab and later professor of pathological anatomy doctor Antonín Fingerland deserves quite a remarkable credit for an advancement of this hospital, though his activities stayed mostly hidden from the public view. He also layed the foundations for scientific work in this hospital.

Outstanding achievements of doctors in Hradec Králové hospital caused also the ever increasing numbers of its patients. When in the year 1930 there were 8.808 people, in the year 1933 the total amount grew to 9.584 patients. Also the number of beds increased; in the year 1934 there were already 547 of them, which ment 52% more when compared with the year 1928.

On the 19th November 1933 the hospital director dr. Bedřich Honzák died and head of the internal department ass. professor Vladimír Ulrich, successor of dr. Tvrzský, took his position. Ass. professor Jan Bedrna, disciple of professor Petřivalský, was admitted as the head of surgical



President of Czechoslovak Republic T.G. Masaryk visiting hospital on the 24th May 1929.

department. By that time there already existed and worked an independent department for dermatology and veneric diseases, headed by ordinary dr. Břetislav Janoušek. A remarkable progress was scored in the dissection lab, led by doctor Antonín Fingerland. Dissections of all those who died in the hospital were being performed, which ment about 320 post-mortems per year. Furthermore, there was also investigated all the bioptic materials obtained during the operations and cases of infections were identified on cultures. For example, only in the year 1933 the number of histological, serological and bacteriological investigations totalled about 10.000 cases.

Such an extraordinary professional advancement of Hradec Králové hospital would not be possible if it were not for the support by representatives of the town and county and also without contribution of other physicians working outside the hospital. One of those who for ever entered the history of Hradec Králové hospital was doctor Josef Vanický, general practitioner with a profound interest in medical prevention and social-health problems. To his great dreams there belonged the idea of creating the medical academy in Hradec Králové, which should provide further education for practitioners from the whole Eastbohemian region. He succeeded in gaining support to his ideas not only of some heads of departments, especially of dr. Fingerland, but also of the County committee two influential members - editor Josef Vaněk and František Šafránek. With their substantial help he succeeded in putting through the proposal that on the vacated head positions the habilitated doctors would be admitted.

Together with another physician from Hradec Králové - dr. Leopold Batěk - doctor Vanický supported doctor Fingerland in his activities to modify the Association of Physicians of Northeast Bohemia encounters into the professional meetings. This idea of dr. Fingerland was accepted and starting from the year 1934 the well known professional meetings of the Association of Physicians of Northeast Bohemia were held regularly twice a month ever since. Gradually they became commonly known as „little pearls“. These were being attended by doctors from quite a wide region. By that time doctor Fingerland was not any more alone in his endeavour at scientizing and improving the day-to-day medical work in the hospital. He had been joined by a kindred soul - associate professor (later academician) Jan Bedrna: „By then we wanted to create such a kind of little Mayo Clinic... nobody thought of any faculty yet...“, remembers later professor Antonín Fingerland, M.D., DrSc.

At the beginning of the year 1936 both the county authorities and the hospital committee of management stated again, that hospital capacity is not sufficient any more. During the year 1935 there were treated here more than 12.000 patients. Construction of a new double-pavilion for gynaecology-obstetrics and dermatovenerology proposed by doctor Jung was accepted. This building was finished by the end of 1937, but dr. Jung did not live to start its run-

ning. He died on the 6th of December 1937. Associate professor Jan Maršálek was appointed as a head of gynaecology-obstetrics and former ordinary Břetislav Janoušek became a senior consultant of the dermatovenerological department.

The building of Hradec Králové hospital did not end by the construction of this new double-pavilion. Before the end of year 1939 an adaptation and completion of the surgical pavilion was done, as well as an additional storey to pavilions of ophtalmology, otolaryngology and dissection lab. In the year 1941 the hospital furnace was enlarged and also the extension of infectious pavilion was started. Nevertheless, that last mentioned adaptation was interrupted due to the interdiction of invaders. In the year 1942 a superstructure of technical buildings was performed. But also the professional differentiation went on. After moving the gynaecology-obstetrics department into the new pavilion (1937) the vacated space in the surgical building was occupied by orthopaedic department led by associate professor Jaroslav Vavřda. In March 1940 a separate neurological department subordinated to internal diseases department was established at the head with ordinary dr. A. Procházková - Mazačová. In spite of all these improvements the absence of pediatric department still represented a big debt. Children were put in different departments while physician-specialist dr. František Schmidt was in charge of their treatment. From the present point of view the absence of any ward for mentally ill patients might seem rather strange. Such a situation lasted till the beginning of Medical

Faculty in 1945. Nevertheless, by then this lack of special department was not considered to be any major problem. At the turn of century the psychiatric patients were taken care of by dr. Leopold Batěk who stressed mainly the home care of these people. He was followed by another outstanding physician of Hradec Králové - dr. Stanislav Němeček, specialist in internal and neurological diseases. He was interested mainly in the neuroses treatment. Thanks to the close cooperation with other general and specialized doctors in Hradec Králové the local health care was ensured in full extent.

Till the year 1945 the number of beds grew to 913. There were working here 9 heads of departments, one ordinary, one physician-specialist and twenty six housemen. Also the plan of dr. Vanický more or less succeeded; by the end of the Second World War as the heads of departments there were working six associate professors. Additionally, during the existence of Medical Faculty, dr. Fingerland and dr. Janoušek were habilitated too. Hradec Králové hospital thus entered the new stage in the free again Czechoslovakia, prepared fully to assume a respectable task of the university educational establishment.

*PhDr. Vladimír Panoušek,
University Teaching Hospital,
Dept. of Psychiatry,
500 05 Hradec Králové,
Czech Republic.*