

Portrait of a Surgeon of the Sixteenth Century.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time."

Many good men and women have left footprints on the sands of Time—deep, ineffaceable prints. But some of them have lived such a long time ago—on the skyline, so to speak, of our mental vision. We read about them, they lived in an age, so different to our own, that in order to appreciate them, we must learn a little of the history of the times in which they lived; this involves a certain amount of trouble, and so they get shunted, and become merely dim memories of our school education.

Those who have lived in modern times, are more in harmony with our own mode of thought and speech, consequently they appeal more forcibly to our imagination and sympathy. It is well, sometimes, I think, to keep our memories green by a retrospective glance into the past, and pay our respects to these long forgotten heroes, especially those who have followed the same calling as ourselves, and we may find that there is something to be learnt from them.

Writing as a nurse, I must say it interests me a good deal to read of doctors of the past, as well as nurses of the past.

"Sairy Gamp" has become a synonym for a neglectful, ignorant, unconscious nurse. She lives in the minds of all modern nurses as a perfect type of all that a nurse should *not* be! We all abuse her unstintingly, and I never heard anyone say a good word for her, until Miss Genn showed the courage of her opinions at a meeting of the Pioneer Club by saying that she preferred "Sairy" to the modern trained nurse!

After all, criticism is, perhaps, good for us, for we are not all that we should be; but, in all earnestness, let us look to it, that we do not deserve all that is said about us.

My retrospective glance to-day is at a man who lived in the XVI. Century, and stands out pre-eminently as one of its greatest heroes, and who very nearly died a martyr's death.

There was no curriculum for medical students in the days when Ambroise Paré resolved to devote his life to the Art of Healing. The men who practised the Art in those days were divided into three classes: The first was a body called *Physician-Doctors*, who, by passing examinations in Latin, obtained the title of Doctor. They appear to have had scant practical knowledge of medicine, and none at all

of surgery. The second division was that of *Master-Surgeons*, corresponding, I should imagine, with the practising surgeons of our day; they were considered very inferior in status to the *Physician-Doctors*, although they must have been far more useful! Thirdly, there were the *Barber-Surgeons*, who were taught nothing at all of medicine or anatomy; all that they were required to know was how to shave, bleed, and dress small wounds.

The same Orders existed in our own country until the year 1745, when the separation of the Surgeons proper from the Barbers proper took place. Previously they had been allied in one body, namely, the Barber-Surgeons' Company.

Until recently there has been an interesting picture in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, representing King Henry VIII. granting a Charter to the Barber-Surgeons; it is now in the National Gallery. But this is a digression; however, a pardonable one, I think.

Ambroise Paré was the son of a poor joiner in Laval, and was born in the year 1517; he was apprenticed at a very early age to a Barber-Surgeon. What little his master could teach him was soon learnt, but it did not satisfy the boy; his thirst for a truer knowledge of surgery led him to study by himself, and to use every opportunity he had, and that the age afforded; and so, by undaunted perseverance, and resolute determination, he rose in time to be a Master-Surgeon. He distinguished himself principally as an Army Surgeon, and was attached to the French Army during their war against Spain; and then it was that he saw the sacred Art of Healing so belied in the practice! The common treatment for gunshot wounds in those days, was to pour boiling oil upon the raw surface of the wound! Paré himself practised it for a time, knowing nothing better, but the tortures the poor men endured by this barbarous treatment so horrified him that he originated the contrary treatment; he employed an antiseptic dressing of terebinth and oil, with white of egg; and with this healing emulsion he dressed the wounds with very beneficial effects.

This treatment applied to wounds was very old, even in his day, he merely reverted to a very old practice in a new way. It is, I think, interesting to note, how oil used internally and externally, has been employed as a healing agent from the earliest times. The great Roman physician, Galen, who lived in the 1st century A.D., prescribed "oil and wine" for wounds in the head; and then the parable of the Good Samaritan affords further evidence that oil was commonly used in the treatment of wounds; but not *boiling* oil! Could anything be more unreasonable!

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