

a city, and were open for the reception of strangers and pilgrims, the sick, the poor, and even the mad. Orphanotrophia (orphan asylums) and other charitable Institutions appear later; but none seem to have kept strictly to one form of charity except the Nosocomia Hospitals for diseases, chiefly founded during epidemics. The earliest records we have of Xenadochia are found in the East, in Asia Minor, where they existed in the third century, and soon became very numerous. A celebrated Xenadochium was that founded by Basilias, Bishop of Cappadocia, outside the gates of his metropolis, most probably to accommodate the sufferers from the plague, A.D. 368. Of this Hospital, a contemporary wrote:—"Before the gates of Cæserea rose a refuge for the sick, like a city in extent, devoted by Basil to the relief of the destitute. Round a church are clustered well-appointed houses, filled with beds for the sick and infirm, who are here carefully tended. Basil himself, a man sprung from a noble family, unaccustomed to horrors and hardships, passes among the afflicted people, embraces and kisses them with Christian love, and himself tends them on their couches." This Hospital was well endowed by the Emperor Valens, and numbers of others were founded on the same principle, and bore the name of Basiliads. In fact, the enthusiasm for the founding of houses of mercy for the poor, the sick, for strangers, pilgrims, and orphans, spread rapidly, while the devotion of the men and women of all ranks of the Christian communities to the unhappy sufferers from the great plagues, which again and again swept over Eastern Europe during the earlier centuries of the Christian era, called forth the admiration of all who beheld them.

Though the care of strangers and of the sick was enjoined in old monastic rules, yet the earlier Nosocomia were not nursed by monks and nuns, but by lay brother and sisterhoods. The reason is not difficult to find. The old monastic life was too strictly contemplative to be compatible with a work calling for such energetic practical contact with the outside world, and it was not until orders were established, whose special duty was the Nursing of the sick, such as the Franciscans, that they took an active part in organised Nursing. But the management and direction of the endowments early fell into the hands of the Church. In 850 the Council of Padua decided that the Bishop should be the head of all the Hospitals in his diocese, not only of those connected with monasteries and churches, but of those founded by laymen, and the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, a few years later, fixed the sum to be devoted to the Hospital or Xenadochium attached to any church or monastery at one tenth of its income.

It was long after Hospitals had been established and endowed in the East, that anything of the kind existed in Western or Northern Europe. The slow progress made by Christianity, the uncivilised condition of the people, and the continued war and invasions that desolated the northern and western countries, account for this fact.

But from the earliest times medicine and surgery, among the Germanic nations, were almost entirely in the hands of the women. It was beneath the dignity of the iron man of those days to care for the weakly and ailing, and the art of healing fell naturally to those who were more gentle and compassionate. In the old Scandinavian and Germanic songs and sagas, it is the women who tend the wounded, bewail the dying, and mourn the dead. They were the Physicians and Surgeons and Nurses of the sick. The wise women knew all the herbs, times, and signs, in sickness; it was they who prepared, with mysterious rites, all drugs, as well as charms and love philtres—even the Valkyria, who bore the dead heroes to Valhalla, were maidens. Not until monasteries became general were men much concerned in the art of healing. Then the cloisters became peaceful refuges for all who were in distress. Strangers and pilgrims were there entertained without question as to who or what they were. Every monastery, every abbey, every cathedral, had its Hospital. But though there was always some monk, who was skilled in all simple medical lore of his age, and who was ready and willing to give his aid to any who needed it, the Hospitals were anything but Hospitals in our acceptance of the word—they offered little but hospitality.

Old Chronicles say, "Those that were received into them confessed and communicated; they were then regarded as the masters of the house, and the monks became their servants. For from the time of Charlemagne, there arose along the main routes, leading to the famous shrines of Rome and Palestine, hospices for the shelter and succour of pilgrims. The famous Hospice of St. Bernard, in Switzerland, which exists to this day, was established for this purpose in 980. In Rome, and Jerusalem, numbers were built for their reception, many being specially founded for particular nations—by pious princes and merchants—until pilgrimages becoming more rare and taverns more plentiful, these hospices either became veritable hostleries or else Hospitals for the sick. It was from small hospices, such as these, that the three great orders of mediæval Nursing knight-hoods sprang—the Lazarists, the Johnnites Order of the Hospital Brothers of our Lady, and the German Order. Originally the wardens of these small hospices, they gradually increased in wealth

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