

and power during the Crusades, became neglectful of their duties, wholly given over to battle and intrigue, to jousts, tournaments, and feasts, and in continual feud with the brothers of rival orders, their arrogant and licentious lives were a striking contrast to their original vows of poverty and chastity.

Far greater was the unostentatious work performed by the religious orders of monks and nuns, such as the Franciscans, the Augustinians, or the Hospital Sisters of St. Catherine, and of St. Elizabeth, who were specially devoted to Nursing, than that of the boastful knights. In the times of great plagues when all fled, it was they who remained steadfastly at their posts, dying among the sufferers they tended, faithful to their calling, a truly noble example for all future generations of Nurses. When, during the Crusades, the terrible scourge of leprosy spread through Europe, the unhappy lepers, outcasts of society, victims of a loathsome disease, sanctified in Christian eyes by the frequent reference made to it in the Bible, became the special objects of Christian charity. Houses for their reception were soon founded, and increased with such rapidity that when Louis VIII. of France, at his death in 1225, left a hundred scudi to every leper house in his kingdom, it was found that there were no less than 2,000 of them in France alone. They were known as leper or lazar houses—were placed under the protection of St. Lazarus—so the knights who joined together for their special aid, were known as the Knights of St. Lazarus or Lazarites. They consisted originally of knights who had contracted leprosy in the East, and now aided their fellow-sufferers to the best of their abilities.

Gradually, however, they were joined by others, and eventually shared in the degeneration of all mediæval knighthoods. But the Nursing of lepers was not confined only to the Lazarists. Many noble ladies and men of good birth, without actually joining any brotherhood, gave their lives and their services for the benefit of these wretched beings, whose misery was augmented by the popular belief of the middle ages, that their physical infirmities were the direct result of their moral depravity.

In all probability it was not only lepers who were received in the Lazar Houses, but many others who were afflicted with repulsive and incurable diseases, not too carefully classified in those days. And as during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries leprosy died out, the empty houses were converted by the State into General Hospitals, which often long retained their original name. Indeed in Germany, the Military Hospitals are to this day called Lazar Houses.

A great impulse was given to sick Nursing by

Pope Innocent III., who bestowed much attention upon the subject, and at the beginning of the fifteenth century founded the great Hospital of St. Spirito at Rome, and placed it in the hands of Guy de Montpellier, founder of the Nursing Order of the Holy Ghost, who with his assistants took charge thereof. Modified as to its arrangements to meet modern views, it remains to this day one of the most justly celebrated monuments of its time. Numbers of Hospitals were built after its pattern, and in Germany many still bear the name of the Holy Ghost, after their great prototype. It is only just to mention the magnificent Hospitals founded by the Mussulmen during the middle ages. The most celebrated is that built at Cairo in the year 1283, and on which an enormous sum was expended yearly. The description of its oriental splendour is almost unequalled. Spacious separate courts were set aside for diseases of the eye—for surgery—for dysentery—for convalescents—and for those suffering from fevers. Here four cooling fountains played perpetually night and day. There were separate apartments for the mixing and boiling of drugs, for stores, and for cooking. A large staff of doctors, and male and female bedmakers attended on the patients, who seemed to have been provided with every comfort and luxury. They were tended and treated not only in this magnificent Hospital, but also in their own homes.

The first Nursing order bearing a distinctly *secular* character were the Sisters of Mercy, whose name will ever be connected with St. Vincent de Paul. The son of a poor shepherd, he was taught compassion by personal suffering, and in his work among the sick poor, he chiefly turned his attention to their bodily needs. Seeing the impossibility of nursing them successfully in the wretched homes, or in Hospitals by *religious* Sisters, strictly bound by *religious* vows, he gave the impulse to modern secular Nursing, when he wrote that the Sisters of Mercy should have—"No monasteries but the house of the sick, no cells but a hired room, no cloisters but the streets of the town and the Wards of the Hospitals, no enclosure but obedience, and for convent bars only the fear of God. For a veil they have a holy and perfect modesty, and while they keep themselves from the infection of vice, they sow the seeds of virtue wherever they turn their steps."

All Hospitals in France were soon given into their charge, and the Nursing abroad is still largely carried on by the Sisters of Mercy.

None the less, the civil Hospitals in France had fallen into a terrible condition towards the close of the last century. In 1784 the state of the patients in the Hotel Dieu is described as frightful. They had become veritable pest houses, to which

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