

tells us that charms, philters, exorcisms, and amulets were commonly worn as protections; signs of the zodiac, papers tied up in so many knots, abracadabra, and the Jesuit's cross.

Dr. Hodges, one of the few brave physicians who stayed out the Plague, and who wrote an excellent account of it, trusted to an issue in the leg, an antipestilential electuary, and a generous and nourishing diet, with pickles, and numerous glasses throughout the day of good sack wine, "to warm the stomach, refresh the spirits, and dissipate any beginning or lodgment of the infection."^{*}

Men of the most daring and original minds were tainted with superstition and credulity. In the sixteenth century Luther emphatically enforced the duty of burning witches, and the last witch was not burnt until 1722.

While this profound belief in magic, this disposition to refer all ailments to the direct influence of supernatural influences, continued to prevail, any material advance in true sanitary knowledge was hopeless.

The Jews, indeed, as I have mentioned, had in their Ceremonial Law a system of hygiene, which, imperfect as it was, appears to have secured for them special immunity from disease.

The Greeks and Romans, too, had a partial sanitary system in their baths, gymnasia, sewers, and a magnificent supply of pure water, which in ancient Rome is calculated to have been ten times that of London or Paris at this day.

The first important sanitary measure directly designed to repress disease which I can find was in 1379, in Italy, when it was proposed that every plague patient should be taken out of the city to the fields, there to die or recover; and that those taking them and attending on them should remain isolated for ten days before being re-admitted to the city.† On each successive outbreak a modification of this plan was adopted; and eventually the necessity for constructing lazzarettos, or isolated houses for the reception of plague-stricken or suspected persons, was universally admitted, and the term of forty days fixed for the period of probationary sojourn. This period was chosen in accordance with the doctrine of critical days in disease, the forty-eighth being determined to be the last of all acute diseases, and hence the term quarantine.

And yet in the Great Plague of London, in 1665, nearly three hundred years later, there was (according to Defoe) only one Pest House, in Bunhill Fields, for the reception of infected patients, capable of holding only two hundred to three hundred people, whereas one thousand are said to have died in a single night.

^{*} "London: Ancient and Modern," by Dr. Vivian Poore, page 17.
[†] Herder's "Epidemics of the Middle Ages."

When plague broke out in a house it was locked, and a watchman placed over it. None were allowed to go out, thus arranging deadly hot-beds and foci for infection. For the people got out secretly, or by bribing the watchmen, and mingled with the people; while the Nurses in charge are said to have wilfully carried infection to the healthy inmates, for the purpose of laying hands on their valuables. And although assemblies of people were generally prohibited, they were permitted to crowd the churches, and thus disseminate infection wholesale.

Erasmus, in the sixteenth century, appears to have been one of the first to clearly connect foulness and dirt with epidemic disease. He attributed the frequent visitations of the plague in England, as well as the sweating sickness, to the filthy condition of the houses. These had only clay or mud floors, littered with refuse and filth of all kinds. Erasmus was so horrified and disgusted at the state of things that he refused on this account the tempting offer of a splendid apartment, and a yearly pension of eight hundred florins, with a benefice which produced yearly one hundred marks, made to him by Henry the Eighth and Cardinal Wolsey, to induce him to fix his residence in England.

Yet this great scholar, one of the most enlightened men of his age, had not always been free from the credulity of the time. In his younger days he recovered from a dangerous illness under the care of William Cape, the most skilful physician in Paris. Yet he gave all the credit of his recovery to St. Genoveva, to whom he had addressed an ode, and failed to discover any merit in William Cape, who had tended him so well.

(To be continued.)

NURSING ECHOES.

THE second birthday of the British Nurses' Association was in very truth an eventful day.

In the afternoon a meeting was held in the library of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, which, I am told, was unanimously of opinion that the scheme proposed by the Association was the best one possible. I hear that a regular constitution, in the shape of preliminary bye-laws, was adopted, and that an influential and representative Registration Board was appointed. Also that certain regulations for the work were drawn up, and the Board empowered to open the Register



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