

Sir Sydney Waterlow and Nursing.

The Life of Sir Sydney H. Waterlow, London Apprentice, Lord Mayor, Captain of Industry, Philanthropist, by Mr. George Smalley, is a book worth reading, and to those who knew him personally, in connection with his work as Treasurer of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, will be found of absorbing interest. It is so consoling to realise that, in spite of adverse circumstances, genuine dogged determination does tell in the end, and that it is because we are not strong enough, not because others are more favourably circumstanced, that they beat us in the race of life—especially is this true *if the goal is a worthy one.*

Having told the story of his rise from apprentice to a prince of printers, and of his public work for the City and people of London, Mr. Smalley has much to say of the success which attended the work of Sir Sydney as Treasurer of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Here we come on an interesting item, when the nursing department is touched upon, namely, that the late Mrs. Gladstone used her influence to have Miss Manson selected as Matron of that great hospital.*

After referring to reforms made in the medical department, we read, "Then came a sweeping proposal—the employment of trained nurses, with a trained and competent Matron as Superintendent. The days when it was possible to be content with the services of that highly respected widow of a highly respected solicitor were over. The Sisters of the Hospital were all highly respected and highly incompetent (this assertion is too sweeping, some of the Sisters were remarkably able women). They did their duty conscientiously, but conscience is not a good substitute for knowledge. One of the chief rivals of St. Bartholomew's, St. Thomas's, had a staff of trained nurses whom Miss Nightingale had supplied.†

"To her Sir Sydney applied, having first persuaded the Governors to grant a retiring pension to the Matron in power. Miss Nightingale undertook to find, and did find, a successor, all the way from Montreal, in Canada (Miss Machin), and four nurses to be under her. I have before me two of Miss Nightingale's letters; admirable letters, but dealing too much with details to be quoted in full. But a sentence or two will show how well this great Sister of Charity understood the art of letter writing.

"I should ere this, had I not been afraid of troubling your well-filled time, have seized the opportunity of giving you joy, and the nurse cause too, for your wise and efficient measures for improving the nursing. . . . I think I am as anxious for your success as for our own. Or rather, it is all one; the good nursing cause, so furthered by

*Dear lady! how like her never to mention her kind offices, and thus receive the thanks which were her due.—Ed.

†Several of the old Sisters at St. Bartholomew's had been trained under Mrs. Wardroper, on Miss Nightingale's system.—Ed.

you. But you would not think much of our training if we had always a stock of people 'trained at a moment's notice,' as the advertisements have it, on hand to offer. God speed St. Bartholomew's nursing and its Treasurer."

"The date is 10, South Street, Park Lane, November 29th, 1878, and the signature 'Ever your faithful servant, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE,' quite in the eighteenth century manner.

"Unhappily the Montreal lady soon departed. The untrained Sisters and Nurses were difficult to manage, nor would they work harmoniously with the trained or with the probationers. Sir Sydney had to start again, inquiring right and left, and finding none who seemed likely to be competent. Suddenly Mrs. Gladstone appeared on the scene. That admirable woman was devoting herself to the creation of her excellent convalescent home at Woodford, in Essex, of which the world knows, and was much at the London Hospital. There was in that hospital, and in charge of a ward of forty (fifty-three) beds, a certain Miss Ethel Manson, whom Mrs. Gladstone strongly commended to Sir Sydney as a suitable Matron for St. Bartholomew's. The careful Sir Sydney went twice to the London Hospital, incognito each time, visiting Miss Manson's ward, but only as a spectator interested in nursing. He liked her way of doing things, but there remained the difficulty of persuading 200 Governors, in whom the appointment vested, to like them also. His diplomacy, however, was seldom at fault. Instead of canvassing the 200 in Miss Ethel Manson's behalf, he induced them to allow the standing order to be suspended, and to allow him to select the Matron for a three months' trial, the Governors then to ratify or reject his choice. So to St. Bartholomew's this lady came on trial, and when three months had expired she was confirmed by the 200 unanimously, all having meantime, I presume, seen the lady and studied her methods. I presume so, because some of the senior doctors objected to Miss Ethel Manson as Matron on the ground that she was too young and too pretty. These faults were not denied, but Sir Sydney replied: "The first fault time will remedy; the second I do not regard as altogether a fault, for I think a kind, genial, sympathising word from a pretty woman is very acceptable to a sick patient." Perhaps the senior doctors were not really in earnest. At any rate, Miss Manson continued Matron of St. Bartholomew's for some years, to everybody's pleasure and satisfaction, devoted herself with energy to the work, developed the Nurses' Training School, and left only to be married. 'In that new state,' observed Sir Sydney, 'neither youth nor beauty were deemed faults.'

M. B.

I have always felt the deepest sense of gratitude to Sir Sydney Waterlow for giving me my professional chance. The story of our first meeting, and its subsequent results, is worth recording as a telepathic tale. Next week I propose to give in this Journal an accurate version of my appointment in the year 1881, as Matron to the Royal Hospital of St. Bartholomew in Smithfield.—E. G. F.

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