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EDITORIAL.

AN ANCIENT FOUNDATION.

No class of the community know better than nurses the value of a great tradition, and they are proud of their training schools, of their methods, of their comrades. In this respect none are more fortunate than the nurses of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. Its tradition of care for the sick has an unbroken record of 800 years, since Rahere, the King's jester, founded the hospital in fulfilment of a vow made during a grievous illness contracted during a visit to Rome which brought him "to an extremity," and he "vowed a vow that if, having obtained health, it should be allowed him to return to his own country, he would erect a hospital for the restoration of poor men." On his way home, "having become whole," we are told that St. Bartholomew appeared to him in a vision and charged him to found a church in his name in a suburb of London, at Smedfield. So Rahere returned to London to discharge the double duty—of fulfilling his own vow to build a hospital, and that laid upon him by St. Bartholomew to build a church. His work could not have been easy, for Smithfield was then an undrained and lonely place where executions took place, and where, indeed, gallows had to be removed from the site chosen for the church. Rahere became the first Prior of the Foundation, and to this day his tomb may be seen in the Priory Church, a noble building which he dedicated to St. Bartholomew. He obtained the Charter of the Hospital from Henry I.

The Augustinian Order was the one selected by Rahere to serve the Priory Church, and brethren and sisters of the Order also cared for the sick of the adjacent hospital. To those sensitive to impressions the spirit of Rahere still pervades this great institution, which has survived the dissolution of the Religious Houses, and, as a secular Foundation under a new Charter, granted by Henry VIII, carries on the good work, which is closely associated

with the City of London, upon which, as the only general hospital within the boundaries of the City, it has very special claims. The true spirit of nursing has always been a marked characteristic of those trained within its walls—though it did not wholly escape the influences of the debased period of nursing, for Sairey Gamp, immortalised by Dickens, and a type, if not an individual, was associated with Bartlemy's.

Next year the Hospital will celebrate, in befitting manner, the 800th anniversary of its foundation, and at a meeting at the Mansion House last week, when the Lord Mayor presided—supported on the platform by the Lady Mayoress, the Minister of Health, and other distinguished persons—steps were taken to arrange the details, and the General Purposes and Executive Committee constituted. It included the Treasurer of the Hospital (Lord Stanmore), a number of almoners and other influential friends of the Hospital, representatives of the Medical Council, and of the Medical College. We note that neither are members of the St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses' League, nor any women whatever appointed members of this Committee, an omission which we hope will be rectified at an early date.

It is a notable and happy coincidence that the Lady Mayoress at the present time is a certificated nurse of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and this was alluded to by the Lord Mayor when, replying to the vote of thanks accorded to him at the above meeting, he said that the Lady Mayoress had a very close connection with Bart.'s, and for that reason alone he would do all he could for its welfare.

We note that the history and usefulness of the Hospital and Priory are to be brought before the public in March, 1923, through religious services, entertainments, probably a Pageant, and scientific and historical exhibitions, which must, of course, include a Nursing Exhibition. The Lady Mayoress could, with the help of the Bart.'s League, arrange one which would be of the utmost interest.

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