

JEANNE MANCE.

Of all the heroic characters in nursing history none shines out with a greater lustre than Jeanne Mance, the founder of the Hotel Dieu at Montreal. Miss Nutting and Miss Dock, in the first volume of their "History of Nursing," tell us that she belonged to one of the most honourable families of Nogent le Roi, a family which produced a succession of distinguished magistrates and soldiers, several of whom had been ennobled by their sovereign. One of her brothers, professor in a university, was celebrated for his profound erudition, but no one of the family ever achieved a glory so great and lasting as that won by the subject of this story. The inheritance must have been good which wrought in her the striking combination of great piety, devotion and enthusiasm with uncommon good sense, and a wise and liberal judgment in the handling of affairs. She is said to have been a gentlewoman of distinguished bearing, and her portrait which hangs in the Hotel Dieu has been thus described:—

"Facing the door is a portrait of the foundress, Jeanne Mance. The face is long and delicate, with fine regular features, clear large, dark eyes, long straight nose, curly hair escaping from the closely fitting cap and a dimpled chin. A short scant cape is pinned around the shoulders, and the face, looking downward, has a pensive expression that reminds the spectator of the famous Cenci portrait in the Barberini Palace at Rome."

It was this highly-bred woman who in the seventeenth century braved the journey by sea from France to Canada, and the continual peril of attack and slaughter by the Iroquois, in order that she might found a hospital at Montreal. The hospital was finished in October, 1644, and surrounded by pallsades. Jeanne Mance and her little band endured incredible hardships, but she remained in the country of her adoption for the remainder of her life.

During the Convention of the Canadian Medical Association from June 17th to 22nd, and of the Congress of the International Council of Nurses, July 8th to 13th, 1929, there was at the Hotel Dieu an exhibition of one hundred objects, chosen from the Archives and Historical Treasures of that famous hospital. Of these treasures none were more interesting than those relating to Jeanne Mance.

"Strange as it may seem," we read in the catalogue, "the Hotel Dieu contains not a single specimen of the writing of Jeanne Mance. There are several specimens, however, in the City Archives, where they are carefully preserved. The explanation probably lies in the repeated destruction of the hospital by fire (1695, 1721 and 1734). Jeanne Mance's papers were probably amongst the documents destroyed."

The exhibits, however, included a plaque deposited by Jeanne Mance in the corner stone of the first Church of Notre Dame, June 30, 1672. The inscription on this pewter plaque is still perfectly clear. It was recovered from the foundations of the original Notre Dame Church about 150 years later, and was then returned to the Sisters of the Hotel Dieu.

Among the historical treasures are "the last will and testament of Jeanne Mance, who died in 1673." This is a facsimile. The original is in the archives of the City of Montreal. She affirms that she wishes to live and die in the Catholic faith. She makes several bequests to the Sisters and to the poor. She directs that certain masses be said for the repose of her soul. She confides her servant to the care of Sister Margaret Bourgeois until it can be arranged to have her sent back to her mother.

In 1694 the original Hotel Dieu having become uninhabitable, reconstruction was decided upon. In November, 1694, the Sisters occupied their new hospital. Alas, a few years later it was destroyed by fire. Among other precious relics that perished was the heart of Jeanne Mance, deposited in a pewter box near the sanctuary lamp.

The 250th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters in Montreal was celebrated with great pomp and marked by the inauguration of Jeanne Mance's monument. It is



The Statue of JEANNE MANCE at the Hotel Dieu, Montreal.

the work of the Canadian artist Philippe Hébert. The main inscription on the pedestal is as follows:—

Jeanne Mance, 1606—1673. With the generous assistance of Madame de Bullion she founded this Hotel Dieu a haven for the unfortunate sick, and gave to it her tender charity, her never failing devotion and the energy of her great soul.

It was at the foot of this statue in front of the Hotel Dieu that Miss Breay in the name of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, placed a sheaf of the lilies of France during the Congress week, in honour of this delicately nurtured, noble and heroic woman, who left her native land braving the peril of the high seas, and the greater perils of murder,

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