

A HISTORY OF NURSING PAGEANT.

How fascinating is Pageantry! How entrancingly it portrays history—its personalities, fashions, romance, virtues and vices—was evinced and acclaimed at the presentment of "A History of Nursing Pageant" produced by the Sister Tutor Section of the College of Nursing, at the Portland Hall on April 28th and 29th, organised by Miss Hillyers, of St. Thomas's Hospital. The Hall was full to capacity at every performance. On the outside of the programme was affixed a photograph of the picture "Florence Nightingale Receiving the Wounded at Scutari," after a print from the painting of Jerry Barratt—and from the contents we learned that we were to view Eight Scenes and Eight Processional Interludes. That the descriptive words were by the Nurses assisted by Miss Irene Cooper Willis. There was music, singing, orchestra, and scenery painted by Student Nurses of the Nightingale School.

The Spirit of Nursing acted as a Chorus, and from the left of the stage explained the various scenes, and on the right, a Modern Nurse from St. Bartholomew's Hospital played a useful part. She handled a History of Nursing—Nutting and Dock no doubt. The players themselves acted in mime—with one exception, the scene between Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig, was in dialogue—and it was amazing how perfectly they all played their parts, how accurate and admirable were the details of their costumes.

In the first Interlude, India 320 B.C., Students welcome Charaka, a most distinguished physician.

"The wisdom of the serpent-god with the thousand heads, who as the depository of all the sciences and especially of medicine, was supposed to be incarnated in Charaka."

Scene 1 took us to the Temple of Æsculapius at Epidaurus—1134 B.C.—and here the God and his daughter Hygeia presided over Healing Ceremonies. Runners announce the arrival of patients at Gates of Apollo, who enter and present their offerings and reclining on couches so that they may be told their modes of cure in dreams. The costumes were purely classical.

We then see the Students of Hippocrates on their way to school at Cos. Hippocrates openly recognised Nature and taught that disease was not the work of spirits and demons or deities, but resulted from disobedience to natural laws. The spirit of the Hippocratic Oath which was read inspires the Medical Profession of to-day.

These tableaux were arranged by Miss Taylor, D.N. Lond., Sister Tutor, and Student Nurses of Guy's Hospital.

In Interlude Women Workers of the Early Church, Phoebe, the first appointed Deaconess, Olympias, once wife of the Prefect of Constantinople, and Fabriola, one of the Patrician Fabian family—who turned Christian and built the first General Public Hospital—pass before us in appropriate dress.

Miss Rosier, D.N. Lond., Matron, and Student Nurses of the Willesden General Hospital, arranged this Interlude.

Scene 2—1134 A.D.—Military Nursing Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Pilgrims are welcomed by a Brother of

the Order and Nursing Sisters tend Crusaders—a very fine picture. The Interlude 1914–1918, Great War—was a scene known to hundreds of nurses who have not yet forgotten its ravages.

Arranged by Miss Christie, Sister Tutor, and Student Nurses of St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, and members of St. John Ambulance Association.

Scene 3—1200 A.D.—presents an incident from the Life of St. Francis of Assisi, who renounced a life of ease and wealth and became the most gallant nursing missionary to the Lepers.

Again Miss Rosier and her Staff gave evidence of their knowledge of Nursing History.

We then came to the Middle Ages and see Elizabeth of Hungary, one of the most beloved saints and nurses—in lovely costume with the basket of miraculous red roses. A Béguine of Flanders passes by, one of the earliest of the Secular Communities, founded by Lambert le Bègue—a Community which exists to this day.

Miss Armstrong, Sister Tutor, and Student Nurses of King's College Hospital, brought us into touch with these beautiful people.

Then we come to 1617.—Scene 4 presents St. Vincent de Paul and the Ladies of Charity. This great Saint saw that Charity was noble, but "ill-regulated," and organised the Dames de Charité. He said: "To send money is good, but we have not really begun to serve the poor until we visit them." Mlle. le Gras, his very right hand, listened entranced to his rules read by the Saint, as we all did.

Miss Funnell, D.N. Lond., Sister Tutor, and Student Nurses of the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton, were fortunate in the episode they arranged so well. The Interlude—A famous English Hospital, was St. Bartholomew's in Smithfield—first Royal Hospital in London—still carrying on its great work of mercy.

We saw Rahere, its great Founder, receiving the Royal Charter, drafted in such detail in the time of Henry I. Then appeared:

1549—Rose Fysshier "the first Matron and the first to wear watchett blue." A charming figure.

1647—Came Margaret Whittaker, "the first nurse to be promoted Sister." Qualifications: "to show fitness in washing the buckes" (linen).

1750—Mary Bisbee, Sister of Treasurer's Ward, which was made from the Matron's late Beer Shop, and then

1835—Sister Rahere. "Stout, ruddy and positive. Noted for teaching the House Surgeon how and where to compress the popliteal artery." And, indeed, it was evident that she was "mester."

Miss Hitch, Sister Tutor, and Student Nurses of St. Bartholomew's Hospital must have enjoyed the vein of comedy which was apparent in the lives of their predecessors in presenting them "to the life."

Scene 5—Nursing as depicted by Charles Dickens in its most debased period, showed us Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig in charge of an ill-fated patient—later rescued from their drunken clutches by gentle St. John's Sisters, when they accepted the call to take over the nursing at King's College Hospital.

Miss Armstrong, Sister Tutor, and Student Nurses of King's College Hospital well performed their thankless task in 1856.

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