

Feast, a Masque of Flowers," penned and pictured by Walter Crane, dated 1889, inscribed in the handwriting of Florence Nightingale "Offered to dear Mrs. Wardroper by her always loving old friend Florence Nightingale."

Amongst the books prized by this History Section were the lives of Sister Henrietta of Kimberley, of Catherine Grace Loch (the first Lady Superintendent of the Indian Army Nursing Service), the four volumes of "A History of Nursing" inscribed to our President by the authors, Miss M. Adelaide Nutting and Miss L. L. Dock of the United States, and as our outlook is not only National but International, "Pathfinders," the history of the progress of Coloured Graduate Nurses autographed by the author, Mrs. Adah B. Thoms, herself a coloured Graduate.

Included in another division, a form of expression of the world's gratitude to Nursing, was a beautiful Staffordshire pottery figure of Florence Nightingale, greatly treasured, and shown on special occasions, together with a statuette of Kuan Yin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy.

The Section of Royal Mementos was of great charm and value, a few of the prized possessions which were fast covering the walls and filling cupboards and drawers.

As a dedication to the spirit in which those lives were spent the founders had carried on the History of Nursing Section; might the same spirit ever animate those who would follow them, then the toast which she had the honour to propose—"Success to the History Section of the British College of Nurses"—was assured of fulfilment.

Mr. Allen S. Walker, supported the Toast "Success to the History of Nursing Section of the British College of Nurses." He said that as an Extension Lecturer it was a matter for sincere congratulation that the College has established a History Section. He had had the honour of taking many members of the Nursing Profession to the Antiquities of London and had found no body of people more interested. Mr. Allen Walker spoke of hospitals in mediæval times and of their somewhat barbarous arrangements and methods of treatment, but priests were in the wards to say masses for the souls of the patients who succumbed to the ministrations of mediæval nurses and doctors; the history of hospital construction provided large beds to hold more than one patient with a chapel at one end. St. Mary's, Chichester, is the only one left with the chapel intact. Of the barbarous surgical methods of the past he had much to relate. The Barbers' Company and the Surgeons' Company were amalgamated in the reign of Henry VIII, and apparently all concerned with the healing of the body had the right of possession after death. The Barbers' Hall still possesses a fine screen in token of the gratitude of a victim of the gallows, who, showing signs of life on the table, was carefully tended, given money and sent out of the country.

Mr. Walker concluded by expressing his pleasure at the opportunity given him by the British College of Nurses at being present on this interesting historical occasion, and the gratification it would be to him to conduct any of those present round some of the historical buildings of London. He heartily wished success to the History Section of the College and the Toast was then honoured.

THE GUESTS.

Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., proposed the Toast of "The Guests," in the following happy vein:—

Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—

It is my pleasurable duty to-night to extend, on behalf of the British College of Nurses, a most hearty welcome to our guests. Some time ago when I was asked to perform this duty, I was filled with pride and pleasure, but as this evening drew nearer the pride gradually evaporated under the knowledge of my inability to do justice to the subject.

I took counsel of my friends, who were encouraging, complimentary and uncomplimentary, but not very helpful. An engineering friend said, "Why not do as we do? If you don't strike oil very soon, stop boring." But even at the risk of committing that unforgivable sin, I must try to express to our guests how very pleased we are to have them with us, and how honoured we feel that so many have been able to be present. Some well-intentioned person or perhaps somebody "with malice aforethought," has handed me a long list of distinguished names, but to attempt to speak of each individually and their work would take far too long, even were I capable of doing so. They and their work are known all over the world.

We have listened with the greatest interest to the speeches—all too short—of Sir D'Arcy Power, Professor Parsons, Doctor Porter Phillips and Mr. Allen Walker, and we feel that they have afforded us a great privilege in coming here to speak to us themselves of their great Foundations; but I wish to assure all our guests that if their pleasure in being with us to-night is but half the pleasure we are experiencing in having them with us, then, indeed, their time has not been wasted.

Apropos of after-dinner speaking, I asked another friend of mine what he considered the best after-dinner speech he had ever heard. He, being of rather a cynical turn of mind, said, "the shortest." Therefore, Madam Chair, Fellows and Members of the British College of Nurses, I ask you to drink with me the Toast of the Health of our distinguished and most welcome guests.

This toast was accorded warm response.

The toast was responded to by Sir George Turner, K.B.E., C.B., F.R.C.S., who addressed himself to the Chair and "Their Majesties and Saintships of the Past."

He said that personally he had enjoyed the evening very much. As a rule when attending gatherings of this nature, he spent much time in speculative contemplation. But he had not previously had the privilege of listening to speeches from ladies. "Give me," he said, "the ladies every time." Reminiscent historically, he said that he went to St. George's Hospital in 1872; at that time there was practically no nursing. What a difference to the present day. In the last fifty years we see an extraordinary improvement. We have now educated women, forming the Profession of Nursing, highly qualified in every way.

He had tried to do his duty by nurses, and once during the war when a nurse was to be married and the gentleman who was to give her away was summoned for other duty, he consented to replace him. Unfortunately he took the bride to the wrong church.

In regard to nursing, his experience was that women were a long way ahead of men. He had had experience of both.

He concluded by expressing warm thanks to the nurses present for their delightful hospitality and for the way in which the toast of "The Guests" had been received.

THE CHAIR.

Captain A. S. Cunningham-Reid, D.F.C., M.P. for St. Marylebone, proposed the Toast of "The Chair," and on rising, said:—

Ladies and Gentlemen:—

It is my privilege to-night to have been asked to propose the Toast of your President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. Like all privileges, this one carries with it a certain responsibility, for I have a feeling that it is verging upon the impertinent for a young layman and a comparative stranger to you—a comparative stranger, that is to say, compared with what I shall be when I am proposing such a toast as this to you in 1953—to attempt to speak to such a distinguished gathering of nurses of the remarkable qualities and achievements of perhaps the most outstanding figure in the nursing profession to-day.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)