

ROYAL NURSES.

MATILDA OF BOULOGNE.

It is not possible, in a series of articles such as these, to devote space to every Queen or Member of a Royal House who has contributed in some manner, great or small, to the evolution of nursing throughout the ages. Undoubtedly Henry I and his Queen created a precedent of some importance by their patronage to the hospital at St. Giles-in-the-Fields and St. Bartholomew's; the impulse thus given was effective in various directions. Many of the pre-reformation Queens after Matilda were interested in the foundation and maintenance of religious houses; we have referred to the part which monasteries played directly and indirectly in relation to the relief of the sick. Kings and Queens, Saxon, Norman and Plantagenet, as well as those of still later times, left their mark on the development of scholarship, the arts and the treatment and care of the sick by the foundation of monastic establishments in various parts of the kingdom. Thus we find that Adelia of Louvain, the second wife of Henry I—"the Fair Maid of Brabant" she was called—has a certain claim to be regarded as one of "The Royal Nurses"; she gave her patronage, and later entered herself, the Monastery at Effingham, and she founded a leper hospital at Wilton. Adelia is more famous, however, as the foundress of the Howard family and of the ducal line of Norfolk than as one of the Queens of England. Moreover, although she apparently nursed Henry with considerable devotion during the nervous illness from which he suffered after the wreck of the White Ship and the death of the heir to his crown, her philanthropic and religious activities would appear to belong chiefly to a period subsequent to her second marriage.

We pass on, therefore, to another Queen whom we have been accustomed to see placed in the category of Royal Nurses: whether she has any great claim to be so placed is sometimes questioned, for her foundation at St. Katherine's was at first rather more definitely religious and collegiate than philanthropic. But none the less we are justified in regarding her as among the Royal Nurses because, through St. Katherine's, she has inserted into Nursing History an impulse that linked up for centuries a certain definite responsibility, for Queens succeeding her, with the care of the sick poor. She serves, in fact, as giving an example of what one means by the scientific study of history; such scientific study does not culminate in a mere record of events, meticulous and valuable as this may doubtless be, but it encourages the examination of all sorts of influences and traces their development in future ages. Most of the history of St. Katherine's Hospital is based on its re-foundation by Queen Eleanor and upon the provisions established under her Charter. But to Matilda of Boulogne is due the credit for its original foundation. In her grief on the death of her two eldest children, Baldwin and Maude, Matilda decided to found St. Katherine's-by-the-Tower and, but for the violation of Eleanor's Charter by Katherine Parr and one of the greatest pieces of vandalism of the nineteenth century, St. Katherine's and its surroundings might still have been one of the few visible, historical monuments to the evolution of nursing. If little remains to us of the very early history of St. Katherine's prior to 1237 yet undoubtedly Matilda gave the archetypal idea from which its development grew. She bought in 1148, from the Church of the Holy Trinity in Aldgate, a piece of land hitherto occupied by a garden and a mill. There she founded St. Katherine's; the name was given to it from that of an early fourth century Christian martyr much talked of by the Crusaders. It was a religious house with a royal mandate to have as one of its functions the shelter of the traveller and the relief of the poor; thirteen poor people were to be maintained by it and we may take it that

those would also, for the most part, be sick. This foundation had its periods of blossoming and its periods of decay, but its roots have been strangely tenacious, perhaps because there were always some who bore within them the recollection that it grew out of the love and the heartache of a courageous queen who, in all the fierce political struggles in which she was involved, yet found time to endear herself to the common people and to the ruling citizens of her capital of London. Nevertheless it is somewhat difficult for us to experience any great interest in the life of Matilda of Boulogne. But few personal references have come down to us in history or tradition to add piquancy or pathos to her story; for this reason one does not easily come into touch with her personality, though there is evidence enough, in recorded history, that she was possessed of natural ability of a high order, of strong determination, resourcefulness, great qualities of statesmanship and indeed of generalship. If she did not aspire to become a patroness of the arts and of learning, if she did not, in her somewhat short reign, find time to develop much further, on her own account, the provisions made for the care of the sick during Henry's reign, we may blame her time and her circumstances and pause for a moment to remember her pertinacity and courage which ultimately brought about the release of her husband and restored him to the throne of her ancestors.

Matilda of Boulogne was the daughter of Mary of Scotland (sister-in-law of Henry Beauclerc) and grandchild of Margaret and Malcolm Canmore. Mary, it will be remembered, had been brought up under the same conditions as Henry's wife in the Abbey of Romsey and, with a lively recollection of the difficulties under which he had won his bride, Henry lost no time in getting his sister-in-law out of the clutches of the austere Aunt Christina and marrying her to his friend the gallant Eustace, Count of Boulogne. This Eustace and his brothers, Baldwin and Godfrey, took part in the first Crusade, and those two brothers were successively Kings of Jerusalem, so that Matilda's ancestry on both sides was such as to engender courage. Baldwin, her little son, whose memory was perpetuated by St. Katherine's, was doubtless named after the great Crusader; his very existence would nevertheless have been forgotten long ago but for his mother's memorial, and the same applies in connection with her second child, Maude, who inherited her name from Matilda (or Maude) the Good. Stephen's Queen is believed to have received her education at the Abbey of Bermondsey. In this monastery her mother had taken a great interest; she had been its patroness and was nursed and died within its precincts while on a visit to England. Prior to her death her young daughter was espoused to a peer of France, and he comes before us historically, this Stephen, as a chivalrous gentleman, witty, friendly, and with great personal charm. He was a nephew of Henry I, who showed to him many favours and built for him and Matilda a fine castle named Tower Royal, considered then to be almost more impregnable than the Tower; from motives of utility it had to disappear from the City of London but, if you have time to wander in the direction of Cannon Street, you will find a small narrow close, covering a part of the site of the old-time palace of King Stephen and his Queen Matilda, which bears the name "Tower Royal"; history connects it with the struggle of the Empress Matilda to gain the English throne. She was in the more direct line than Stephen's wife, for she was the daughter of Henry I who, before his death, had seen to it that his bishops and nobles swore fealty to her as heir to his crown. Time proved that many held their oath but lightly. Stephen and Matilda were in England when Henry died; people had learned to love this lady who dwelt in the centre of their city, who was withal as much a descendant of the old Saxon Kings as was the

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