

fast by Bynghuame (? Colstone Bassett in Notts.). The priest went to a barber in Nottingham, who told him that he had a cure therefore and could cure him thereof. In the same town was a wise surgeon, of whom the priest "had witting," and he wisely went to him to ask counsel. "The said leech warned him that he should in no mannerwise put no corrosive nor none other violent medicines, nor let no cuttings come thereon, for if he did he promised that it would bring him to the death without any recovery."

CORPORATE SURGERY.

The struggle of the surgeons for the right to rank as a profession and to protect themselves from becoming a mere trade is described. Debarred from a University education, surgeons in Paris, in London, and in a few other towns developed their own system. It is amazing to learn that the union of surgery with medicine was not brought about until 1859 in Scotland and 1886 in England.

During the greater part of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth Europe was at war, and in England the Wars of the Roses kept surgeons so active that they wrote nothing. Italy, Germany and France were more fortunate, for writers in each country left records of their experience in the wars. Jerome of Brunswick, Ambrose Paré, and the Brancas of Catania in Sicily were some of the most noted. The latter, "a family of itinerant surgeons during the fifteenth century, did something for plastic surgery by using the skin of the forehead, cheek and arm to restore mutilated lips and ears. They thus paved the way for the work of Caspar Tagliacozzi of Bologna (1546-1599) and of Sir Harold Gillies at the present time."

THE TUDOR AND STUART PERIODS.

We next come to the Tudor and Stuart periods, when "English surgeons rapidly made up the ground they had lost during the barren period in the fifteenth century. Peace was restored and settled conditions returned with the accession of King Henry VII. In France and Germany wars and rumours of wars prevented any great advance in surgery as a science during the seventeenth century. . . . No great surgeon rose for many years after the death of Ambrosé Paré, though Fabricius Hildanus (1560-1624) did much for German surgery, and his wife, who was also a surgeon, deserves to be mentioned, for she was the first to suggest the removal of metallic particles from the cornea by means of a magnet."

HOSPITALS.

After the death of Richard Wiseman, a notable surgeon, in 1676, a period of surgical history in England ended. Surgery suffered eclipse and social conditions were at their lowest. "Then it gradually dawned on thinking people that poverty was uneconomic and that better provision should be made for the sick poor. A wave of philanthropy spread over the British Isles, and hospitals under the name of infirmaries were founded in many of the chief towns." The author points out that such hospitals were no new thing, and instances the Hôtel Dieu in Paris (850); St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London (1123); St. Thomas's and others. Of the Hôtel Dieu, John Finch, writing to his sister, Lady Anne Conway, from Paris, in 1651, describes it as "the best hospital in the world, either in respect of the numbers of sick persons, which is about 2,000, or their accommodation, which is as good as any sick person requires, save that the multitude of the diseased makes them forced to lay six or eight in one bed, which hinders certainly the recovery of many and infects others fully that had but a little of a disease in them."

SCIENTIFIC SURGERY.

Surgery as a science began in Italy (we are told) when Prince Cosi founded the Accademia dei Lincei at Rome in

1603, in London with William and John Hunter, "two brothers who came to London from Lanarkshire, William in the summer of 1741, John in September, 1748 . . . Foremost among the pupils of the Hunterian school were Hewson, Sheldon, Cruikshank and Wilson, all beautiful dissectors and enthusiasts. . . . Their teaching and example produced a remarkable group of great surgeons in the next generation: Cline, Abernethy and Astley Cooper in London, Hey at Leeds, Philip Syng Physick in America. A third generation continued the good work, Sir William Lawrence and Sir James Paget being outstanding examples, until in the fourth generation came Joseph, Lord Lister, who, learning like John Hunter, by experiment, placed surgery upon a safe foundation and enabled it to make enormous advances in every direction."

In 1885 Neuber at Kiel, who had grasped Lister's principle, endeavoured to obtain his results by a simpler method, "to attain sterility by boiling in the soft Kiel water everything coming in contact with a wound-instrument, dressings, the clothing of the patients, and the overalls of the surgeons and attendants. He washed out the wounds with boiled salt solution, and to hard water he added bicarbonate of soda.

"In 1886 Schimmelbusch, one of Von Bergmann's assistants at Berlin, elaborated a method of sterilising by steam under pressure which soon came into general use. Experience taught in the end that cleanliness was the underlying principle, soap and water being the most efficient means for securing it in the case of the skin of the patient and the surgeon, boiling for instruments and steam heat under pressure for all washable garments and dressings."

We can refer but briefly to the chapter on the beginning of Modern Surgery by the conquest of septic disease. It should be read, re-read, and absorbed. To another on Specialism (including dentistry, which, we are told, only became a profession when Rogers, and the Tomes, father and son, placed it upon a broad foundation). War Surgery and American Surgery are next dealt with, and the chapter on the introduction of Anæsthetics is of dramatic and absorbing interest.

SURGICAL NURSING.

Lastly, we come to Surgical Nursing—military and civil—secular and religious, the first regular nursing service for the wounded being begun during the crusades by the Knights of St. John (1099). In England nursing became secularized at the Reformation, but long remained on a semi religious basis. "The head-nurse in a hospital ward was still called Sister, she spent her entire life in nursing and was always unmarried. Hundreds of years of training ended in the production of a special type—unlettered and unskilled in the ways of the world—tradition had formed them into perfect nurses with the power of training others like themselves." Of such was Mrs. Porter, the Scottish nurse immortalized by W. E. Henley, who had been a patient in the ward over which she presided.

Of the nursing staff at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in bygone days Sir D'Arcy Power writes: "They were uneducated, but they were loyal, and had the best interests of the patients at heart . . . It is reported, for instance, that on one occasion the sisters and nurses made a determined attack upon a sheriff's officer and obliged him to relinquish a patient whom he had captured in one of their wards."

Thus we come down to Elizabeth Fry, Amalie Sieveking, Dorothea Dix and so to Florence Nightingale, who "by her experience, pertinacity and organizing power established a system which spread and, for a time, dominated the civilized world." Lastly, to the passing of the Nurses Registration Acts in 1919 (not 1925) when "State Registration for Nurses was established and nursing took its place as a profession."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)