

entered Paris triumphantly, as a conqueror and a Catholic, he heard Mass and assisted at the Te Deum in Notre Dame. In 1611 his funeral service was celebrated here.

Then come more glorious events, magnificent moments,—the coronations of Napoleon and Josephine Beauharnais in 1804—when at the altar steps Josephine received the crown from the Emperor and was by him solemnly consecrated Empress of the French. The Duchess d'Abrantès has left us an account of this scene, a word picture never to be forgotten. "When it was time," she writes, "for her to take an active part in the great ceremony, the Empress descended from the throne and advanced towards the altar, where the Emperor awaited her . . . He was radiant with joy as he watched the Empress advancing towards him; and when she knelt . . . the tears she could not restrain fell upon her clasped hands, raised more towards him than towards God: at this moment, when Napoleon, or rather Bonaparte, was for her her true providence, at this instant there was between these two beings one of those fleeting moments of life, unique, which fill up the void of years. . . ."

"But Napoleon," the Duchess concludes, "when it came to his own crown, hastily took it from the Pope's hands, and placed it haughtily on his own head—a proceeding which doubtless startled his Holiness." Ten years passed, and we find Louis XVIII and his family attending Mass at the same altar. Twenty-six years later, in 1840, a service was held to commemorate the restoration of the ashes of the Emperor to French soil. The marriage of Napoleon III and Eugénie de Montijo took place in Notre Dame in 1853, under circumstances of extraordinary splendour. Alas! but fleeting glory!

In the Treasury are to be found vessels of gold and much paraphernalia of ecclesiastical pride and pomp, and certain holy relics. The crown of thorns is here, given to Saint Louis by the King of Constantinople and carried to Notre Dame, on August 18th, 1239, by the barefoot king. Here also are pieces of the Cross, for the protection of which Saint Louis built Sainte Chapelle, the relics afterwards being transferred to Notre Dame; there is a nail from the Cross given by Charlemagne to Constantine enclosed in a crystal case.

Realise the centuries of adoration, the uplifting of the heart in prayer to God, which have sanctified every stone of Notre Dame!

The eloquence of great preachers, including St. Dominic (to whom in the pulpit the Virgin appeared bringing with her his sermon all to his hand) persuading to virtue the souls of men.

The tears of the broken-hearted in their sable veils. The joy of queenly brides, and mothers of Kings!

Visions!

I ask you, is it not of these marvels that on the morning of July 9th next the congregation at Notre Dame will be mainly composed of the Nurses of the World, members of that great confraternity, the International Council of Nurses?

A most solemn and exigent occasion. Not to be missed by those whose aim is to raise ever higher the standards of the work they love in the service of mankind.

PRE-REFORMATION NURSES IN ENGLAND.

THE NUTTING-DOCK PRIZE ESSAY.

By MISS MARGARET HELEN HART.

(Abridged.)

II.

(Concluded from page 60.)

"It is no small matter to dwell in a monastery or congregation, and to walk therein without complaint: and persevere faithfully unto death . . . If thou wilt stand and grow as thou shouldst: bear thyself as an exile and pilgrim on earth."
THOMAS A KEMPIS.

Any investigation into the lives of the mediaeval nursing Sisters is naturally hampered by the fact that upon taking up her profession, a Sister left behind the world and all its vanities, and, except in isolated cases, anything approaching self-expression was looked upon with distrust. Everything belonged to the Community. The modern passion for advertisement had not yet commenced, so that for the most part their lives are unchronicled. Again, at the Dissolution it is probable that during the ejection of the inmates of the convents and abbeys, the papers of the Houses were destroyed. As it is, when the material is pieced together carefully from such sources as old statutes (as that of St. Mary's, Chichester), charters and accounts, we are rewarded by some glimpses into the typical life of a nursing Sister.

It may be assumed that the majority of these Sisters were the daughters of gentlefolk, or at least of prosperous tradesmen who could give their daughters the rudiments of what was then considered a suitable education for young ladies. Chaucer's Prioress and her nun act as a mirror in this direction, for although they might have been without the more robust learning, they could speak French, in a provincial kind of way, and in their tales showed themselves conversant with the lives of the Saints and the Scriptures. The very fact of the institution of lay Sisters, in some Orders, such as the Gilbertine, shows that a certain standard of education was expected from the fully professed Sisters. At the Augustinian House at Bridgwater it is recorded that women "not of gentle birth but still fit for the purpose" were appointed to assist in the nursing. They slept not in the Sisters' cloister, but in a chamber adjoining the infirmary and were to be always careful and ready "both by night and day to help the sick and to minister to them in all things." This was probably the hospital's method of dealing with a very modern problem—that of procuring sufficient women of a suitable standard to undertake the arduous duty of caring for the sick. So simple a solution is not possible to-day.

Although the sin of simony (*i.e.*, selling the gifts of the Holy Ghost for money) was deemed so reprehensible, and Superiors are warned against the receiving of novices solely on account of their wealth without due regard to their vocation, it was permissible and usual for a Sister to give her dowry to the House, rather than to the poor, before making her vows. The first Sister of St. Bartholomew's Hospital whose name is recorded—Edena of Writtele, has escaped oblivion because of this. And so have the other two Sisters mentioned before the Reformation—Isabella of Bray (temp Henry III.) and Joan of Pertenhaye (temp Ed. III.).

A Sister was not admitted to the corporate life of the Community until she was fully professed, whereupon her hair was cut and she was clothed in the Habit of the House. This, of course, was as varied as are nurses' uniforms to-day.

The Gilbertine Sisters had "three tunics and a scapular for work, two fuller white tunics or cowls for cloister,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)