

NURSING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS, 1837-1937.

(Published by the South Australian Trained Nurses Centenary Committee, Adelaide.)

There are many ways of celebrating a centenary, but we have seldom seen one more well chosen or more likely to prove acceptable to the future than that adopted by the South Australian Trained Nurses' Centenary Committee, which was established in Adelaide. It decided to compile a history of the evolution of nursing in that State during the last hundred years. They are to be congratulated, for the book under review is more than mere history; rather the reader gets the impression that he is following a kind of pageant of nursing history, a process of evolution and development. Much thought must have gone to the arrangement of the work, for no aspect of nursing activity, no branch of the profession, has failed to find its own particular memorial in this centenary publication. In fact the book is something of a work of art because of the manner adopted to give every aspect of nursing activity a place in it. Here is endless variety—the more so that the work has not been confined to one pen—and each writer brings her contribution to the picture with a style and character of its own. Every nurse, trained in the State would appear to find a place in the book, if not in relation to the stories of the foundation and development of different hospitals then in the lists of their trainees or among the many little historettes which appear of South Australian Nurses who have held positions of eminence in the State or elsewhere.

It was a happy thought on the part of the Committee to ask Dr. Grenfell Price, C.H.G., D.Litt., to write a short introductory history of the foundation of South Australia. This seems to place the subsequent work into its proper atmosphere and so it is helpful for those of us at least who have not yet made close acquaintance with the great Commonwealth. This introductory history of the State seems to foreshadow the grit and courage that have characterised the work of the nurse pioneers of South Australia, descendants of "heroic men and women who, in 1836, set forth on the six months' voyage (from Great Britain) in tiny hideously uncomfortable vessels to venture their all

in an almost unknown land." High tribute is paid to one outstanding figure among these pioneers—Colonel William Light. He alone saw the value of the Adelaide plains; he shared the fate of many progressive spirits and received little of gratitude, for he died in poverty, "a martyr for South Australia," though now there is no name more honoured in her history. So much for the setting, and then, as if to throw into relief the coming story of progressive nursing develop-

ment, there follow two pages from the diary of one Mary Thomas, which is in the archives of Adelaide. She was an early settler and few people nowadays would submit to such drastic curative treatment as that meted out to her at the hands alternately of "Mama" and her medical adviser. But Mary Thomas was of a hardy stock and survived it all, for her diary closes with the statement that she finds herself "in tolerable health."

Next the volume proceeds to indicate the measures taken in those very early days to lay the foundations of health in the State, and next there follows the history of the development of Adelaide's great hospital with references to the eminent nurses who, from time to time, have controlled its destinies, in so far as the nursing is concerned. A writer in 1881 has stated that its early history "is wrapped in the most defying obscurity" which "his most painstaking endeavours have not been able to pierce." We are informed that the first Adelaide Hospital was founded ninety-nine years ago on what has been described as "unoccupied desert." The hospital itself was but a little pise hut, measuring 12 ft. by 18 ft. In one of its old Registers appears an entry which we should like to quote. It is to the effect that

it was considered "worthy to be recorded that to Dr. Wyatt belongs the honour of having sawn off the first leg needing amputation in South Australia in the year of our Lord 1837." Dr. Wyatt is believed to have been the first medical man in charge of the hospital. The Adelaide Hospital has from time to time changed its site and the history devotes some space to telling of the rapid building additions that have taken place since it was established in its present position; it is all most interesting, this rapid growth and the steady adoption of new scientific discovery to meet the needs of the sick, but one might



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