

## THE STORY OF ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL, 1106—1947.\*

This attractive publication by Charles Graves is in keeping with the traditions of St. Thomas's Hospital, which has always upheld the highest standards of Nursing.

The Story of St. Thomas's is a fascinating one of age-long service to the sick poor of London, dating from the reign of King Stephen.

We learn that—"The Hospital survived the Black Death, the Wars of the Roses, the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Plague and the Great Fire of London. It stoutly refused the nominees of Monarch after Monarch."

Originally an infirmary attached to a religious house in Southwark, the Hospital took its name at the canonisation of St. Thomas à Becket, and thence forward dispensed all manner of potions, charms and "holy bitters" not only to the sick poor of London but to needy travellers who entered the City of London over the only bridge from the south—the ancient Roman bridge of Southwark. Many of the sufferers were lepers, the scrofulous, the rickety, and those afflicted with plague, malaria, dysentery and enteric fever, and those from the wars.

Down the centuries the work of St. Thomas's greatly increased, and early in the 18th century, under the influence of notable physicians and surgeons, came the beginnings of a teaching hospital in modern medicine.

Of its illustrious, long history, however, we feel that chapters "The Vision of Miss Nightingale" and "The Vision Fulfilled: The Nightingale Nurses" are the most stirring. In these is the story of how, under the guiding genius of Miss Nightingale, St. Thomas's became the cradle of modern nursing; the first training school of its kind (the Nightingale Training School) was founded, from which sprang training schools throughout the country and the world.

The author aptly alludes to her spiritual ideals in this pioneer movement, so far-reaching in the betterment of mankind. "Let us hail," she said in an address to her own probationers (1884), "the successes of other training schools sprung up, thank God, so fast and well in latter years. But the best way we can hail them is not to be left behind ourselves. Let us, in the spirit of friendly rivalry, rejoice in their progress as they do, I am sure, in ours. All can win the prize. One training school is not lowered because others win. On the contrary, all are lowered if others fail." With true vision Miss Nightingale spoke for the future as well as for her own time.

Extremely interesting is the detail recorded of some of the illustrious personages associated with the hospital in the distant past, notably Sir Astley Cooper, Keats (a stick-it doctor), Miles Coverley and Dick Whittington, and many famous physicians and surgeons.

There is a graphic description of the ordeal of the war years when the hospital suffered widespread destruction from enemy action so severe that it has to be seen to be believed.

Nevertheless, characteristic of its long history, the Hospital well and surely survives the catastrophe of war, for we read that splendid plans are being prepared by the Governors and their architects for the future St. Thomas's, far excelling anything dreamed of. In the rebuilding scheme full advantage is taken of the Hospital's unrivalled

site, and a special feature in the plan is that all patients' wards command the view of Father Thames and the Houses of Parliament—a scene dear to the heart of every Britisher.

We cannot close this review without mention of the late Dame Alicia Lloyd Still, Matron of St. Thomas's and Superintendent of the Nightingale Training School from 1913 to 1937, who gave many years of devoted service to the Hospital, and the reproduction of her portrait is among the many fine illustrations throughout this work.

Not only to Thomas's Nurses will the book be a valued possession, but to Nurses the world over will this Story of a Thousand Years of Service take pride of place on the bookshelf.

Well might it be said of Thomas's—"The story of the past is told and the future may be writ in gold."

A. S. B.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL,  
Queen Square, W.C.1.

January 9th 1948.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have forwarded, under separate cover, the Syllabus of the forthcoming lectures to be given here in the Post Graduate Course on Neuro-surgical treatment.

The Autumn Course of Lectures, notice of which was in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, were well attended and much appreciated, and I hope we may look forward to a similar success with this series.

Yours truly,

MARGERY LING, Matron.

GRENFELL ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,  
66, Victoria Street,  
London, S.W.1.

January 12th 1948.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Your kind help in advertising our Christmas cards in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING has greatly benefited our work in Labrador and Northern Newfoundland. Many in the North will know less suffering and distress and your generous co-operation is deeply appreciated by the Grenfell Mission on both sides of the Atlantic.

Yours truly,

BETTY SEABROOK.

### KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

*Nurse in South Africa writes:* "I have been a subscriber to THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING since 1904, and look forward to getting my copy every month, and enjoy it from cover to cover. I wish you every success."

*A Nurse writes from Edinburgh:* "I still wish to have the JOURNAL; it keeps me in touch with all Nursing questions and it is always up to date *re* Nursing, etc."

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)