

once might happen again, and that at some time, in some place, we shall be caught off our guard and sent headlong to the ground to provide a spectacle of the tragic or the ludicrous for others. We shall, in other words, have been partly conditioned in our attitude towards life by the dramatic event we have witnessed. This conditioning of the audience, which is unsuspected more often than not, forms a very important function of the drama, and I shall have occasion to return to it.

You will have noted, no doubt, that a simple dramatised event which almost weekly reduces cinema audiences to paroxysms of laughter has some form of association with the religious sense in man. This association might be surprising at the first encounter, but it is at once true and fundamental. The drama, with all the allied arts of the opera, the ballet, and the variety stage grew from a common root in the ancient Greek religious festival. The Greeks, in the festivals of the god Dionysus (Bacchus), celebrated their rites in song and dance. These songs were of two kinds, the one solemn and full of deep portent, and the other merry and abandoned. From the first, the Dithyrambic Ode, grew the tragedy, and from the second, known as the Comus the comedy developed. Let us consider the growth of the tragedy first.

Imagine a chorus of people grouped in a circle about an altar singing their hymn in honour of the god, and expressing in rhythmic formal gesture the mood and purport of their song. This is roughly the manner in which the dithyramb was performed. Then suppose that a certain modification takes place and that some person apart from the chorus is introduced into the circle to sing some part of the song in character. Here you have the basis of dramatic dialogue, and, supposing the character to express himself in movement and gesture, the basis of mime. Now something like this actually happened, and when, very near the beginning of the fifth century B.C., Aeschylus added a second actor, the drama really began.

Now, nearly all the early tragedies of the Greeks dealt with the religious significance of a "fall" or the possibilities of a "fall" in the course of human destiny. Let us dip into one of them to see what sort of result they achieved. "The Suppliants" of Aeschylus is widely considered to be an early and not very highly developed example of Greek play, so let us examine that. The story, which is taken from ancient legend, is meagre, and to modern ears, perhaps, fantastic. Aegyptus and Danaus were brothers living in Egypt. Aegyptus was the father of fifty sons, and Danaus the father of fifty daughters. It was the wish of Aegyptus that his fifty sons should marry the fifty daughters of his brother, but the daughters, believing such a close alliance to be unholy, fled from Egypt with their father and landed on the shores of Greece in the country of the Argives. It is at this point that the action of play begins. The daughters of Danaus, who form the chorus in the play, appear as suppliants at the temple of Jove the protector of suppliants and guardian of the laws of hospitality. Knowing that their destiny lies far beyond their control, they sing the agony of their suspense:—

"O would that Jove might show to men
His counsel as he planned it,"

But it is not given to man to know the evils that lie in his path. In fear he may attempt to anticipate the future, using the best of his intelligence in so doing, but in vain:—

"But mortal man, through cloudy fear
Shall search in vain to know it."

Here, of course, we get the sense of the possibility of a "fall" rendered into song as it might have been in the dithyrambic ode. Later, however, it is given a more truly dramatic exposition. Pelasgus the king of the Argives comes upon the scene to meet Danaus and his daughters.

(To be concluded.)

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

A MEETING of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the offices of the Council, 23, Portland Place, London, W., on February 24th, 1950.

Miss D. M. Smith, Chairman, presided. She reported that September 22nd, 1950, was the date when the new Nurses Act would come into force; also that applications for nomination papers for the forthcoming election were being received.

Finance.

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee bills and claims submitted for payment were approved, and the sums of £2,700 for cash account and £500 for postage were allowed.

The sum of £445 10s. was agreed for further equipment for the Assistant Nurses Department, and £52 16s. 3d. was approved for stationery for the Accounts Department.

Registration.

Miss Lane, Miss Pearce, Miss Willis (when matters concerning Mental Nurses are involved) together with Miss D. M. Smith, Chairman, and Miss C. Alexander, Vice-Chairman, were appointed a Sub-Committee to consider matters relating to the recognition of schemes of training outside the United Kingdom and applications for registration from nurses trained abroad and requiring special consideration.

Education and Examination.

Approval of schemes of training were granted; and a two-years' pre-Nursing Course approved.

It was reported that the following Sub-Committee have been appointed:—

(a) To deal with matters arising out of the Examinations and matters connected with the re-institution of the Test Examination.

Miss Dey, Miss Catnach, Miss Fish, Miss Holland (Miss Smith, Chairman of Council and Miss Alexander, Vice-Chairman of Council, *ex-officio*).

(b) To deal with the Revision of Syllabuses and allied matters relating to the training of Student Nurses:

Miss Holland, Miss M. J. Smyth (Miss Smith, Chairman of Council and Miss Alexander, Vice-Chairman of Council, *ex-officio*).

(c) To consider matters relating to the conditions of approval of Hospitals as Training Schools:

Miss Dey, Mr. Barnes, Miss Fish, Miss Lane, Miss M. J. Smyth (Miss Smith, Chairman of Council and Miss Alexander, Vice-Chairman of Council, *ex-officio*).

(d) To consider the question of the type of expenditure which can be considered as Nurse Training expenditure under Section 4 of the Nurses Act, 1949:

Miss Dey, Mr. Barnes, Miss Holland (Miss Smith, Chairman of Council and Miss Alexander, Vice-Chairman of Council, *ex-officio*).

General Purposes.

In consideration of additional furniture required for the Council Room to accommodate the increased number of members in the newly constituted Council, it was agreed that six mahogany desks be purchased at a cost of £348.

It was also agreed that a third Accounting Machine be purchased at a cost of £504.

Disciplinary Case.

The case of Robert Lee, S.R.N. 689, R.M.N. 8484, was considered and the Registrar was directed to remove his name from the Register of Nurses.

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