

THE  
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT  
OF NURSING

FRANK

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OF NURSING**



*Emphasizing the Cultural Background of the  
Race and the Influence of Philosophy and  
Religion on the Healing Arts*

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DEDICATION

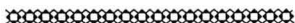


**To the**

**Greater Honor and Glory of God**

AND TO ALL MY STUDENTS, PAST, PRESENT AND TO COME

## PREFACE



Great movements in the history of mankind have been activated by an ideology or philosophy of a particular group dating back several generations before precipitating factors gave those movements major importance.

We stand in the middle of the twentieth century. We see nursing emerging from adolescence to maturity, from apprenticeship to professional status. This progressive development, like the growth of all man's lasting endeavors, is measured in terms of centuries. Invention and perfection do not occur simultaneously. Potentialities must be developed. Change must be gradual, steady, and intelligently directed; otherwise, regression is as probable an outcome as progression.

The reason for any great change is rarely simple. To show the complexity of a situation we ascribe facets to the total picture. Thus, we say the factors influencing change are economic, social, political and religious. In fact, the philosophy influencing a movement is the life principle of that movement. The philosophy underlying the practice of the healing arts is, in truth, the foundation of those arts. Just as philosophy and religion have an inherent connection with intellectual and cultural development through the ages, so have they left their imprint on the development of the healing arts of which nursing is a member.

The author acknowledges the many good works produced by writers of histories of nursing, all of which emphasize one or more of the facets named above. The author believes that the spirit of nursing as it has developed through the centuries, particularly through the practice of a genuine Christian philosophy of life, has yet to be brought into focus. Neither has nursing re-

ceived its proper setting in the cultural background of the various periods of history of which it was and is an integral part. This text aims, therefore, to bring before the student of nursing the influence and importance of a functioning theistic philosophy of nursing; the necessity of understanding people as we find them in their various cultures; and the significant part played by philosophy and religion in the development of our revered profession.

This text is not a chronological listing of events; it is an interpretation of how peoples of different times and places lived and how they cared for themselves in health and sickness in the light of the principles that dominated their lives. Those events of the past that have bearing on the present have been stressed. From them we derive both humbleness of spirit and encouragement; humbleness of spirit in the realization that neither recognition of problems nor progress in solving them has been limited to our own age; encouragement in the realization that human nature is basically the same throughout the ages, that its problems are not too different although the setting and the emphasis may differ.

The course has been planned for students enrolled in professional schools of nursing. It has been written primarily for Catholic schools of nursing; however, it may be used to advantage in any school. It is hoped that this course will stimulate the student of nursing to further interest in history and its allied branches.

The text has been divided into units which aim to group the historical development of nursing into the larger periods which have contributed to its foundation. The units are not mutually exclusive. This is merely a device aimed at lessening the confusing elements that tend to appear in histories. Summaries, references, lists of suggested student activities and study aids are found at the end of each unit. Maps and illustrations enrich the content.

The author is deeply indebted to the Reverend Peadar Arnold who painstakingly and critically read and re-read the manuscript, checked its sources, and censored it as well as gave constructive suggestions for its improvement. Acknowledgments are due to Doctor S. Thomas Greenberg, professor of philosophy, for his interest, help and valuable suggestions; to Sister M. Raphael Eccell, C.C.V.I., librarian, who aided in the search for source

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S.C.M.

*Feast of the Most Holy Trinity*

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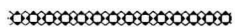
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## **UNIT I**



## **THE PRE-CHRISTIAN ERA**



## INTRODUCTION

When the curtain first rises on recorded history we find ourselves viewing peoples possessing varying degrees of culture. The thinking individual reflects that this did not happen at once. He starts a search to find the antecedents. Immediately he is confronted with such terms as *civilization*, *culture* and *history*. A brief explanation of past and present usages of these terms may assist the student of history to obtain a broader, a less biased viewpoint of the rises and falls in human endeavors than he would have by merely plunging into isolated facts.

*History*, generally speaking, is a record of man's endeavors in terms of his thoughts, words and deeds, and the forces that have influenced him from the beginning of time. There is no prehistoric period in the true sense. We use such a term to designate the earliest periods which have left us no record of their past or whose records we have not discovered or deciphered. As new sources are found, new interpretations are given and thus history is never a closed book. Originally the story of the race was transmitted orally. The spoken word was succeeded by pictography and both have been replaced by writing which is more accurate than either of the preceding sources, so we have come to think of history in terms of a written account of the past.

The word *history* refers to an organized and logical inquiry into past persons, conditions and events. The term itself was coined by Herodotus, *ca.* fifth century B.C., a Greek gentleman who traveled extensively throughout the then known world, inquired diligently about the past in each of the lands he visited, obtained first-hand information on human developments and narrated his findings in an interesting and appealing way and who is often referred to as the *Father of History*.



#### 4 Introduction

Frequent reference is made to *civilization*. The original meaning of the word referred to *civilis*, a citizen, at a time when people were judged by the type of civil rule that governed them. The Greeks and the Romans considered themselves superior peoples because their idea of citizenship surpassed that of their barbarian neighbors. Today we use the term civilization to designate the social organization of a people, e.g., states, tribes, clans, and so on.

Because of the limitation of the term civilization, it is preferable to describe a people by their *culture*. Everyone is characterized by a culture of some sort. The nearer the plane of mere animal existence a person lives, the lower the level of his culture; the greater his achievements in matters peculiar to human intelligence and effort, the higher is his level of culture. Physical, mental and spiritual aspects vividly color the culture of a people. Progress is directed by the mind of man. It is man who thinks, interprets, discovers and invents. The greatest developments have always been found in those areas where men congregate together, share their talents, and cooperatively develop their endeavors. This is particularly true of thriving towns and cities. It is this work of men, living together and working together, that creates a culture. The process always has been and always will be an evolving one. Whatever trend a particular culture has taken has influenced not only its immediate creators but generations to come. Each generation leaves a cultural heritage to which the succeeding generation must adjust itself. What is done today does have an influence on what will be done tomorrow. Culture is a cumulative process, selective factors in it are passed from one person to another, from one generation to another, from one age to another. Accretions may be good or bad, beneficial or harmful, and thus they affect society progressively or regressively. Culture is characterized by periods of decline as well as by periods of development.

Ruins and records transmit the material aspects of culture and various systems of education transmit its immaterial aspects. What is not transmitted is lost and thus we must discover or invent anew what was once known.