

ON NOTABLE BOOKS IN OUR HISTORY



The book entitled *Povijest Družbe sestara milosrdnica sv. Vinka Paulskog* (The History of St. Vincent of Paul Sisters of Charity Congregation), published in Zagreb in 1935, has already been addressed in the Historical Review section in 2005¹. The book definitely deserves to be included in the collection of books of high relevance for our Hospital and for the history of medicine and health care, not only for its implications in the history of our Hospital but also for its historical and social importance in general. In 1935, the book was prepared by the Sisters of Charity, in order to mark the twentieth anniversary of their, as they put it nicely, “arrival to the Croatian soil”. The book is a chronicle of events related to the Sisters of Charity work in Croatia, thus also containing authentic data on the foundation and development of our Hospital. The chronicle was written by a number of persons, initially by Vendelin Pfaner, sisters’ priest and confessor, and then by sisters. From 1895, Sister Vincencija Rehberger wrote it in Croatian language. As the book

represents a chronicle of ongoing events, the style underwent gradual modifications but always remained picturesque, vivid, linked to time and space, nowadays quite unusual but still comprehensible. The 19th century life in Croatia and Bosnia, among poor people in particular, is today hardly conceivable to both people of faith and laymen. It is now hard to imagine that someone could feel happy and content simply for being nicely received by the people, although there was no bed but only two boards covered with straw².

Sisters of Charity were very proud of their Hospital, which was opened in 1894 at the current site in Vinogradska cesta. So, they wrote in their book: “The King made a round of the Hospital, looked over the premises and admired modern arrangement and nice furniture.”³

The book contains a number of interesting descriptions of the Hospital. Records on the government to Sisters of Charity Congregation relationship are of special importance, pointing to the always actual financial problems, and so is description of the Hospital construction at its current site from 1893, illustrated below by only two sentences:

“The Hospital in Vinogradska cesta was the most up-to-date and largest health care institution in our country, and almost world known for its modern arrangement ...”

“Debts were piling up, the conditions worsened, and the question of selling the Hospital emerged as early as the first decade of its function.”⁴

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References

1. Historical Review. Acta Clin Croat 2005;44:319.
2. Kratka povijest Družbe sestara sv. Vinka Paulskog u Zagrebu. Zagreb, 1935:127.
3. Kratka povijest Družbe sestara sv. Vinka Paulskog u Zagrebu. Zagreb, 1935:223.
4. Kratka povijest Družbe sestara sv. Vinka Paulskog u Zagrebu. Zagreb, 1935:213.