

The Nursing Record

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EDITORIAL.

WE reproduce, this week, in another column, a leading Article which appeared in our influential contemporary *The Times*, on the 12th inst., commenting upon the eloquent letter of H.R.H. Princess Christian, which we reprinted last week from the same journal. It is written with all the elegance of diction, clearness of expression, and complete mastery of the subject, which are so specially characteristic of our contemporary's essays upon medical matters, and which have added to their presumed author's great scientific reputation, the unusually conjoined lustre of high classical scholarship

with extreme mathematical precision. Small wonder need be felt then, that there are several points raised in this Article which deserve the closest attention from Nurses. We propose to consider these in turn, and therefore would ask our readers to preserve this number of the journal carefully for future reference. To-day we desire to discuss one of these questions, the importance of which, it appears to us, is only understood by few members of the Nursing profession. We refer to the methods by which, in the future, the public will be able to obtain the services of those Trained Nurses whose assistance it seeks in the hour of sickness. Let us first recapitulate the history of this matter; let us observe how it stands to-day; and then let us endeavour to glean, from its past and its present, some idea of the manner in which it will probably be arranged in the future. Private Nursing, as we understand the term, it must be remembered, is a thing of modern growth, for the simple reason, that skilled Nursing itself is now only in its earliest youth. But from the dawn of creation, women have been "ministering angels, when pain and anguish racked" their fellow creatures. They gave the cup of cold water to quench the thirst of fever, and bathed the throbbing head or wounded limbs. But for many reasons they could only tend the members of their own immediate circles. As time went on, and the population of the world increased, the major part had, for the common good, to work at definite occupations. The young had manual labour to perform in order to maintain themselves and their families. It was realised that the knowledge of how to tend the sick required much experience, and so Nursing gradually passed into the hands of the older women in the community who themselves had suffered much, and presumably therefore had, by direct personal experience, acquired that knowledge. And so in time each town and village came to possess its "wise woman," who was, for her skill in treating disease or accident, either dreaded as a witch, or beloved as a person of superhuman power and benevolence. In either case, she made a livelihood by assisting, with more or less success and dexterity, those who claimed her help. She

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