

"DARMSTADT, Dec. 21st, 1866.

I am trying to found what is no small undertaking, a 'Frauenverein,' to be spread all over the land in different Committees, the central one being under my direction, for the purpose of assisting the International Convention for nursing and supporting the troops in time of war, which was founded at Geneva, and to which this country also belongs. The duty in time of peace will be to have Nurses brought up and educated for the task, who can then assist in other Hospitals or amongst the poor, or to nurse the rich, wherever they may be required in time of war. This Committee of women has to collect all the necessary things for the wounded and for the marching troops, has to see to their being sent to right places, &c. All these things were done by private people in this war, and, though quantities of things were sent, the whole plan was not organised, so that there was want and surplus at the same time. In time of peace these things should be organized, so that, when war comes, people know where to send their things to, and that no volunteer Nurses go out who have not first learnt their business. The same thing exists in Baden, in Bavaria, and in Prussia, and here it is much wanted. But all these undertakings are difficult, particularly in the choice of persons to assist one. Still I hope I shall be able to do it. My mother-in-law helps me, and I hope before long to be able to begin."

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PRINCESS CHRISTIAN says :—

"1867.—The experiences of the late war had shown the necessity for an efficient and widespread organisation for aid to the sick and wounded on the battlefield. Already, in 1865, a Society had been formed in Hesse, with Prince and Princess Charles as its patrons, in accordance with the resolutions passed at the Geneva Convention in 1863, and had done good work in the last year. The Nursing of the wounded had hitherto been undertaken by 'Deaconesses,' 'Sisters of Mercy,' and Orders of a kindred nature. After the close of the war, those at the head of the Committee (or Society) made themselves responsible, so far as lay in their power, for the wounded and disabled, and for the families of those who had fallen in the war. It was, however, felt to be very desirable that other Committees should be formed throughout the country for the purpose of training specially qualified Nurses.

The Princess was deeply interested in this question—indeed, her whole attention had been directed to it since the beginning of the war, after she had seen what was done in Baden under the direction of the Grand Duchess. She had also before her the example of Florence Nightingale, and the good she had done during and after the Crimean war. The Princess was naturally fond of Nursing, and of all that had to do with it, and she therefore eagerly took up the idea of founding a 'Frauenverein,' or 'Ladies' Union'—an idea which, under her auspices, was soon most successfully carried out.

She wished lay women and ladies of all classes to join in this undertaking, so that the Nursing should not be confined, as heretofore, to religious orders only. After much consultation a Committee was formed in 1867, consisting of six ladies and four doctors, with the Princess as President. The Central Committee of the Ladies' Union was to be at Darmstadt, under the Princess's direction. The other Committees spread over the whole country. Its object was to assist the Nursing and supporting of the troops in times of war, and in times of peace to train Nurses, to assist other Hospitals, or amongst the poor, or to nurse the rich—in fact, to help wherever help was required. In 1868, the members belonging to the Ladies' Union had greatly increased, and, in 1869, they reached the number of 2,500."

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THEN came the terrible year of 1870, when the war which effected the consolidation of the German

Empire broke out between that country and France, and in which Prince LOUIS of Hesse played such a heroic part. We are told :—

"Ever since the Prince's departure, the Princess had remained 'at her post' in Darmstadt, helping, comforting, and advising all around her. She was proud to be a wife of a German officer serving in the field of such a cause, though her life for the present was full of anxiety and care. She worked like any other woman, to alleviate as best she could the sufferings of the sick and the wounded, and giving aid to those who were plunged into destitution by the war. Whilst she was living with her children at Kranichstein, the 'Hullsverein' or Committee of Aid had its headquarters in her palace at Darmstadt. She herself went there every day, visited all the Hospitals, also the ambulances at the railway stations, and superintended the organisation of 'Committees of Aid' all over the country. The Committees which she had organized long previously now proved themselves an untold blessing.

The 'Alice Society for Aid to Sick and Wounded' had sixteen trained Nurses ready for work at the beginning of the war. Through the voluntary help of some of the best doctors and surgeons, who arranged classes at different places for the instruction of all those who were anxious to help to nurse during the war, the number of Nurses was increased by degrees to one hundred and sixty-four. These were sent to the different hospitals in Hesse, to ambulances near Metz, to the hospital trains, and the hospitals on the steamers.

In her own palace the Princess arranged a depôt for all necessaries required for the sick and wounded. Later on, another was established in the Grand Ducal palace. Besides the many regular Nurses, a number of women and ladies joined together to serve out refreshments, during the night as well as the daytime, to the wounded, who were constantly passing through Darmstadt and halted at the railway station. Similar Committees were, thanks to the Princess's own initiative, formed all over the country.

One of the Hospitals at Darmstadt, erected by the English National Red Cross Society, and supplied with English surgeons, received the name of 'The Alice Hospital.' Under a special arrangement it was subsequently taken over by the Hessian military authorities. In this hospital, as in others established independently of the 'Alice Society,' women and girls of all classes lent their aid."

How great must have been the satisfaction of Princess ALICE that in time of peace she had done so much to prepare for the horrors of war, and by the special training of a staff of Nurses greatly minimised the suffering amongst her wounded countrymen.

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WE re-publish with much pleasure the following annotation from the *Lancet* :—

"It is reported that fashion, late, but for once true, in taste, has begun by occasional ventures to appropriate the seemly nursing costume as part of her system of decoration. We need not be surprised at the preference thus expressed. Cleanly, simple, neat, but undemonstrative as it usually is, the dress of female attendants on the sick was not likely to escape entirely from the flattery of imitation. Nevertheless, we consider its exhibition at all times and places, and especially its use by those who have no professional title to its use, to be an error and a folly. The Nurse's apron, cloak, and bonnet are as much her distinctive regimentals as military scarlet is the national guarantee of a soldier's position. Wearing it, we know exactly who and what she is, we can somewhat gauge her character by her attire, and we can trust her service; but if any and every admirer of her comely dress may ignore its distinctive character, we lose much more

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