

Nursing in the Victorian Era.

It has been thought that a history, however brief, of the rise and progress of Trained Nursing during the Victorian Era would be both instructive and interesting, and we have therefore determined in this special number of the **NURSING RECORD**—commemorative as it is of the longest

and most glorious reign in English history—to give a brief outline of the work which has been accomplished in the Nursing world in the United Kingdom, since 1837. For the following account we are indebted to the valued contributor who signs it:—

Sixty years ago, when the Queen ascended the throne, it may fairly be said that there was neither skilled nursing, nor trained nurses, as we at the present day understand those terms. The type of woman—dirty, disreputable, and drunken,—who devoted herself to attendance upon the sick, because she was considered fit for nothing else, has been depicted for us, by the novelists of that day, in a manner, which even if exaggerated, was recognised at that time to be deserved, and sufficiently scathing to prove that the nurse of the day was not only ignorant, but dangerous to the sick upon whom she was supposed to attend. The immortal character of

Sarah Gamp was sufficient to stamp the "Nurse," during the first third of this century, as a person who disgraced one of the noblest callings to which womenkind can devote themselves.

PRIVATE NURSING.

It was three years after the accession of Queen Victoria, that Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, who must always be looked upon as the real pioneer of

Nursing in this country, recognised the necessity for providing more skilled and trustworthy attendants for the sick of the richer classes; and in order to carry this into effect, that most benevolent and far-sighted woman inaugurated the Institution of Nursing Sisters which has from that day existed in the neighbourhood of Bishopsgate Street, in the City of London. Mrs. Fry's idea evidently was to provide women of character and efficiency, and, in fact, her organisation was the first



MRS. ELIZABETH FRY.

attempt in this country to place the great department of Private Nursing upon a proper basis. The workers of that day, as depicted in the pages of Dickens, Thackeray, and others, are represented as so hard and cruel that the very name of "Nurse" was held in horror and contempt. It was therefore not an easy task which Mrs. Fry undertook, and she probably went as far as the circumstances of the

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