

time permitted when she provided for each Nursing Sister to attend at a General Hospital for certain hours each day, and for a period of a few months, this being recognised as a system of training in advance of anything then existent. The usefulness and trustworthiness of these pioneer Private Nurses led to the formation of a scheme in connection with St. John's House for the better nursing of hospital patients, which in its turn developed into a further provision of private nurses for the sick of the richer classes. This was inaugurated in 1848, and in succeeding years one institution after another commenced to supply trustworthy and well-trained nurses for work in private houses. It is interesting and important to observe, therefore, that Private Nursing must be regarded as the pioneer department of the profession, and that this, in fact, was called into existence chiefly to meet the demand for careful attendance upon the sick in private houses. The credit of the next great development in the system, should, we think, be given to Miss Firth, who started the London Association of Nurses, in Bond Street. Before then, the Institutions paid the nurse a regular salary, though of comparatively small amount, and charged the public for her services at so much higher a rate that a very considerable profit was made. Miss Firth's scheme practically consisted in the nurses obtaining much better remuneration, because they obtained their own earnings, only paying a commission on them. The principle, in fact, was excellent, and the Bond Street Institution has always prospered, and has showed itself ever ready to advance with the times in the training it requires from its nurses. It has therefore well deserved the professional respect and public confidence which it has gained.

Unfortunately, however, the very success of private nurses and the increasing demand for their services led to extreme abuses, and it became notorious, that women destitute alike of character and of knowledge, were in the habit of stealing, or forging, hospital certificates and testimonials as to character, and were by means of these obtaining admission to certain nursing institutions; while others who had failed from various causes in completing a hospital education were also admitted into such institutions, by which these so-called nurses were palmed off upon the public as thoroughly trustworthy attendants upon the sick. The gravest injury was often caused by these women, and it was even found that some of them were thieves who, on release from prison, were again able, on the strength of their spurious certificates, to obtain positions of great trust and responsibility.

At the same time, Nursing Institutions started by unprofessional people sprang up on all sides,

and obtaining custom by specious advertisements, launched upon the public hundreds of ignorant and untrustworthy women, in the guise of trained nurses, paying these women small salaries, but charging large fees for their inefficient services, and so making enormous profits for their proprietors. The scandal grew greater and greater until at length, as we shall shortly show, a movement was started to bring about the better organisation and discipline of the nursing profession. And so, for the second time, it is noticeable that just as we have seen that Private Nursing led to the institution of a better system of Hospital training, so the abuses which had crept into the same department, were the means of bringing about the organisation of Nursing into a recognised profession.

Finally, as a result of that organisation the natural demand was made that nurses should obtain their own earnings; and, as a result, first the Nurses' Co-operation, and then the Registered Nurses' Society and other co-operations were formed, whereby private nurses were enabled to obtain their own fees, paying only a small commission so as to cover the working office expenses.

Such is the present condition of Private Nursing—the best Institutions demanding from their workers that they shall have passed through a complete three years' hospital education, and promptly dismissing any on their staff who prove to be unworthy of trust, either from lack of professional competence, or from defects of personal character. It is permissible to look forward and express the conviction that progress, in the future, will continue upon the lines already so clearly laid down; that Private Nursing in this country will be organised upon the co-operative method, only thoroughly-trained and registered nurses being employed, and thus a guarantee be given to the public of the efficiency and character of these attendants, while the most remunerative department of nursing work is kept for those who are not only thoroughly-trained, but who have proved themselves to be thoroughly trustworthy.

#### ARMY NURSING.

Continuing this historical survey, we find that the next development in the Nursing world practically arose out of the deplorable neglect of the welfare of our soldiers in the Crimea. Their sufferings were so great, and the public at home were so deeply stirred, that the Government despatched Miss Florence Nightingale with a band of earnest and devoted women to nurse the sick and wounded in the hospitals at Scutari and elsewhere. And the national gratitude which was expressed for their valuable

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