

Nursing Pioneers.

THE words Nursing Pioneers recall at once such names as those of Mrs. Fry, Miss Florence Nightingale, Agnes Jones, and Sister Dora, and the names set one pondering. Could one find their equal in the Nursing Profession nowadays; if not, have nurses—have women generally—deteriorated? It must be remembered, in the first place, that the four Nursing Pioneers we have mentioned had opportunities, such as few of us have nowadays, of evolving order out of chaos, of rendering skilled nursing services when these were almost unknown, and of impressing upon their generation, consequently, the supreme value and importance of such services. Nowadays everything is more or less cut and dried, and "the trivial round, the common task" has to content most of us. Again, it is machines which are in demand nowadays; it is a distinct disadvantage to have any per-

sonality, and nurses, quick to learn that individuality is labelled "dangerous" take every opportunity of effacing their personal characteristics, and of converting themselves into colourless imitations of their colourless neighbours. And yet—personality is a thing to be cultivated. Before all things it was the personality of the early pioneers which left its stamp upon their times. Technical skill they had, no doubt, in a marked degree; but technical skill, however

faultless, would never have placed them upon the pinnacle of fame which is theirs to-day. It is their personality for which they are remembered, and rightly, for it was undoubtedly this which carried them triumphantly through the difficulties and dangers which they so courageously faced.

And this leads us to comment upon the importance of character in the selection of candidates for pioneer work, more especially abroad.

It is not too much to say that a nurse in such a position holds both the national, as well as her professional, credit in her keeping, and if she proves frivolous, indiscreet, unwise, she may do an infinity of harm to both. It is an extraordinary fact that nurses who do well in hospitals at home frequently throw aside all discipline and conventionality when they are abroad. We have been repeatedly impressed with this fact in our correspondence with foreign Matrons. We receive, in our editorial capacity, many letters which do not appear in the columns of the NURSING RECORD, and

from all sides comes the complaint of lack of discipline, and of broken contracts, on the part of nurses abroad. From South Africa, South America and India, both in the Indian Army Nursing Service and amongst the plague nurses, comes the same story. The importance, therefore, of a wise selection of nurses for foreign service, more especially when the nurses are required for pioneer work, is obvious.



MISS JESSY S. PARSON.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)