

## The Professional Training and Status of Nurses in Sweden.\*

By PROFESSOR ALINQUIST.

EDUCATED trained nurses having charge of the sick, were first introduced into our country in the middle of the present century. At hospitals and infirmaries they had usually employed uneducated persons as under-nurses and assistants, who, during the absence of the physicians, had charge and supervision of the sick. But, as medical science rapidly progressed, the need of properly trained nurses became more and more urgent, and it was felt that, combined with the cultivation of the mind and heart, special knowledge was necessary so as to duly fill the place of a sick-nurse.

Then, in 1849, the "Deaconess Institute" was opened in Stockholm, founded on the institution established by Pastor Fliedner, in 1836, at Kaiserswerth, for training nurses for the sick and poor, and this institution of ours has ever since carried on a most beneficial activity.

The Red Cross Association, the original object of which is to care for the sick in times of war, began to be active in Sweden in 1866. During the long period of peace we have enjoyed, its members have chiefly devoted themselves to private nursing.

Thanks to the Deaconess Institute and the Red Cross, the most urgent needs of nursing had been supplied, but there yet remained more to be done. Then, in the mind of Her Majesty the Queen of Sweden and Norway, who herself a sufferer, felt cordial interest both for the suffering sick and those that devoted themselves to nursing, there arose the idea of founding an institution for the training of gentlewomen in the higher branches of nursing, that those who felt called upon to devote themselves with love and self-sacrifice to the care of the sick, might have the opportunity of obtaining training, and thus form a band of clever trained nurses for the demands of public and private nursing, and, in 1884, in consequence of the Queen's initiative, the "Home for Nurses" was established. This Home, however, proved far too small, and, by the generous donations of Their Gracious Majesties the King and the Queen, the present Sophia Nursing Home was built and opened on October 1st, 1889.

1.—The Deaconess Institute began to train deaconesses in 1851. The intention being not only to train them as nurses, but for the care and instruction of sick, distressed persons, or anyone otherwise needing assistance, to educate Christian women of the Evangelical Lutheran

\* Prepared for the International Congress of Women, London, June, 1899.

religion. Young women of all classes are admitted between 20 and 40 years of age, the training courses lasting from two to two years and a half.

- (i.) Course in household duties, one year.
- (ii.) Course in practical nursing, one year.
- (iii.) Theoretical course of general instruction, longer or shorter, as necessary for each individual.
- (iv.) Theoretical course of nursing while at the same time practising nursing.

It is after three or more years' probation that the probationer, after votes being given by all the deaconesses, is accepted as a deaconess, and takes the usual vows. The Institute now has 211 members, including the pupils on preliminary probation. Almost all these tend the sick among the less fortunate members of the community.

The payment made to each deaconess by the Institute is very small, but, should she be invalided in her old age, there is a Home for Aged Deaconesses in connection with the Institute.

2.—The Swedish section of the Red Cross, since 1867, imparts instruction to nurses, the first to teach being a pupil from St. Thomas' Hospital, London. As pupils are accepted only Swedish women of the Evangelical faith, who have proved themselves of good repute, are in good health, have a good and benevolent disposition, an earnest desire for the calling of nurse, and possess other qualities which render them suitable, therefore, moreover, they must have enjoyed a course of instruction answering to that of next highest classes in the Swedish public schools. Their age should, as a rule, be between 21 and 30.

First, a six months' training course has to be passed, the instruction being simultaneously both theoretical and practical, the latter being imparted at one of the large hospitals of the metropolis. When the pupil with good certificates has passed this course, and is deemed suitable, she is accepted as a nurse in the service of the Association, when, for a further period of six months, she must do duty as under-nurse at a hospital. During the two succeeding years, she must serve at that place to which she is appointed by the Association. After the lapse of this time, she is at liberty; but, in case of war, she must present herself for service.

In 1890, the Association set up a small Nurses' Home for their pupils and some of the private nurses.

Each year the Association trains 12 nurses.

The Red Cross Nurses have a special uniform, which is always worn during the time of training; but other nurses belonging to the Association are at liberty to do as they like anent wearing the uniform or not.

3.—The School for Nurses at Sabbatsberg Hospital began to be active in 1881. So as to become a pupil, there must be proofs of good

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)