

Review.

THE HISTORY OF NURSING IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

Under this high-sounding title Mrs. Sarah A. Tooley essays to give in one volume, published by S. H. Bousfield and Co., Limited, 12, Portugal Street, W.C., a History of Nursing in the British Empire, and indeed of nursing outside the Empire from the time of Xerxes. Only one who was not a trained nurse would have had the temerity to attempt such an impossible task, and it can surprise no one that it has been carried out in a very superficial manner, and that glaring inaccuracies, which appear to be in some instances deliberate misstatements are found in its pages. Mrs. Tooley has evidently no sympathy with the modern movement for nursing organisation, and on several occasions has allowed her bias to lead her astray into the realms of fiction instead of history. This is the more inexcusable because the history of the movement for nursing organisation is written in black and white in official documents, and the principal persons concerned in it are still living. Fifty years hence there might perhaps have been more difficulty in disproving some of Mrs. Tooley's statements, but to-day there is none, and it is apparent that her publishers have been placed in a very invidious position by their acceptance of some of her statements as history. Although from the previous quality of Mrs. Tooley's work, one did not expect great things from a literary standpoint, one did at least expect that the author would take the trouble to study the question and to verify statements before publishing them as history, and this I propose to show she has not done. She has chosen a noble theme for her book, unfortunately she has dealt with it ignobly.

To mention a few instances. Mrs. Tooley must indeed consider that she possesses the magician's pen if she imagines that by dipping it in whitewash, and recording her opinions, she will erase the evidence stamped in black and white in blue books and other official documents.

She would have been well advised to refrain from turning over the polluted soil of bygone battlefields, but since she has gone out of her way to do so, in a partisan spirit, some comment is necessary.

As space is of importance, I do not propose to deal with her diffusive personalities, but to confine my criticisms to some of her statements with regard to the Royal British Nurses' Association.

THE BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

In connection with the foundation of the British Nurses' Association, Mrs. Tooley says: "The idea of forming an Association of Nurses originated chiefly with Miss Catherine Wood," and endeavours to support this by saying that Miss Wood wrote to Sir Henry, then Mr. Burdett, suggesting that a nursing section might be formed within the Hospitals' Association. What has that suggestion to do with the British Nurses' Association? Absolutely nothing. The idea that British nurses should be formed into an Association for their mutual benefit and registration

was conceived by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and proposed by her at a meeting held at her house on November 21st, 1887. Not, as Mrs. Tooley states, composed of "the ladies who had been interested in forming a nursing section" (of the Hospitals' Association), who, with very few exceptions, were not invited by Mrs. Fenwick to the inaugural meeting. Those taken into her confidence were her old friend and former pupil, Miss M. Mollett, then Matron of the Chelsea Infirmary, and Miss Isla Stewart, her successor as Matron at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, both women of progressive thought and high intellectual attainments, and until the preliminary scheme for the formation of the British Nurses' Association was in print, it was never placed before Miss Wood, or any other member of the nursing profession.

The old conventional matron, as represented by Mrs. Wardroper, of St. Thomas's Hospital, had no sympathy with the aspirations which would lead nurses to form a professional Association, and she with her friend, Miss Vincent, and various other members of the Hospitals' Association Committee, remained bitterly antagonistic to this modern nursing movement. Mrs. Tooley's statement that the British Nurses' Association sprang from the Sectional Committee of the Hospitals' Association is, therefore, not only untrue, but absurd.

THE REGISTERED NURSES' SOCIETY.

In reporting the formation of the Registered Nurses' Society Mrs. Tooley states in the most invidious manner that "it claims to be the first co-operation of Chartered Nurses," and was founded by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick."

I do not know on what ground Mrs. Tooley insinuates that the Registered Nurses' Society makes a claim to anything to which it has not a right. It claims to be the first Society of Chartered Nurses because it was so, and no juggling on her part can alter facts which are recorded in the official organ of the Royal British Nurses' Association of May 1894.

The foundation of the Registered Nurses' Society was part of Mrs. Fenwick's work for the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the *raison d'être* of its foundation was to provide work for its members, as it had been demonstrated on several occasions that they were boycotted by anti-registration institutions.

The absorption, two years later, by the anti-registration clique within the Association, in conjunction with Miss Etta Jackson then Secretary of the Registered Nurses' Society, of members, probationers, copies of rules, and uniform, and the whole system of its organisation, and the setting up of a society under the title of the Chartered Nurses' Society, within a few doors of the offices of the Registered Nurses' Society has long been recognised as a most dishonourable proceeding and one which I should have imagined Mrs. Tooley would hesitate to acclaim.

I can only briefly allude to the suggestion by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick for the formation of an Army Nursing Service Reserve again as a part of her work for the Royal British Nurses' Association, a report of

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