

GERMAN NURSING IN THE ARMY AND NAVY.

SISTER AGNES KARLL, who presented a paper on Nursing in the German Army and Navy, said that recent times had produced great changes in the provision for the sick in the German army, both in war and peace. In Prussia, in 1831, during the occupation of the Russian-Polish frontier, the lack of a trained nursing staff was acutely felt. The following year, by an Order in Council, an institute for the training of soldiers as nurses was founded, and they were given the name of surgeon's-assistants. Their duties were limited to assisting the doctor in the lazaret and on the battlefield, to rendering first aid, and to doing ordinary nursing.

An official medical report, issued early in the nineteenth century, defined the soldier-nurse's duties as follows:—"The soldier-nurse is to make illness, recovery, nay even death, easier to his sick comrade. He is to be on duty as a brother of mercy in the hospital wards by day and by night." Love of their vocation was required of these men, "because of the disagreeable impressions connected with it"! They formed part of the active troops as privates during their training, and on passing an examination were raised to the position of surgeon's assistant with the rank of lance-corporal and an increase of pay. In 1852, by another Order in Council, the name of these men was changed to lazaret-assistants.

In the war of 1870-71 the lazaret-assistants underwent a crucial test; 8,336 were on duty with the German army, and rendered first aid to 468,687 sick men and to 116,821 wounded, without counting the number of French wounded also assisted. No less than 107 of these Prussian lazaret-assistants laid down their lives, 16 died a brave death on the battlefield, and 9 succumbed to wounds received. During this war a medical staff corps was formed, with the result that the medical men of the army received the rank of officers. This influenced the training of the soldier-nurses as lazaret-assistants.

The last edition of the book of instructions for soldier-nurses was published in 1886, but a new one is to be issued next year, as an addition to the plan of instruction for the State examination. From 1892-1894 great numbers of the lazaret-assistants were ordered out to combat the great cholera epidemic in Hamburg and elsewhere. They stood the test admirably, and in many instances this was recognised by the bestowal of a badge of honour. In other German kingdoms army nursing developed along somewhat different lines, but sufficiently similarly to fit in with the main system when the union of the German army took place after the last war, and in the recently developed navy it was only necessary to adapt this system to the special conditions. The foundation of nursing by women in the army was laid by the Red Cross during the great wars, but the help of voluntary, untrained nurses proved so unsatisfactory, in spite of the excellent work of individuals, that a central committee of the Red Cross was founded in Berlin. It provides for the organisation of the trained women nurses, as well as of the male nurses, for the inland

lazarets. In Prussia alone there are 24,000 beds in these hospitals, and the Prussian division has a reserve of 1½ million marks. The committee places about between 3,000 and 3,500 nurses at the disposal of the army in case of war, besides some 2,000 assistant nurses who have acquired some elementary knowledge in a short course.

There are also about 1,500 Johanniter Sisters and 1,500 women of the Maltese Order, who with the Bavarian Knights of St. George do both military and civil nursing. Sisters of the Roman Catholic orders also do excellent work.

Sister Karll said also that recently the position of "Army Sister" had been created in the German army. The Sisters belong chiefly to the Red Cross Mother Houses and have a special military uniform, as it was thought this rendered the maintenance of discipline easier for Sisters not belonging to religious orders. (Specimens of this uniform, kindly lent by the military authorities, were on view in the exhibition at Caxton Hall.)

Up to the present the navy had not availed itself of the help of the Sisters either in the home lazarets or in those on men of war.

THE "CROIX ROUGE" IN FRANCE.

THE COMTESSE DE KERVEGUEN, fraternal delegate from the Red Cross Society of France, spoke of Red Cross work, and said that the patriotism of the Frenchwoman was a very strong feeling. The highest and purest motives impelled her to it, for there was scarcely a woman in France who had not several very dear relations in the army. The work of the Red Cross was to utilise this feeling and convert it into a disciplined force, for what the Society feared most was not the lack of help, but that it should be encumbered because that help, though very generous, was untrained and inefficient. Army nursing in time of war was a very complex question. The French War Office expected that in addition to the existing civil and military hospitals, which would soon be overcrowded, the Red Cross Societies should within eight days of the declaration of war be able to provide 150,000 beds and 20,000 to 30,000 nurses. Actually her society had 20,000 beds and 4,000 nurses; the other Red Cross Societies rather less.

A great effort had been made for some years to get those nurses efficiently trained. Last year a Red Cross training hospital was established in Paris, and M. Mesureur had generously opened the general hospitals of the Assistance Publique to the Society for training, and since 1908 the military and naval hospitals had been opened to it by the Minister of War. These courses were very precious, because the Red Cross nurses thus got into touch with the Army Medical Corps, under whose direction they would work in time of war.

The Society's nurses had for eleven months done excellent work in the field hospitals in the late war in Morocco under very trying conditions, and their work had been publicly highly commended by the generals commanding the forces and by the Minister of War, who awarded a gold medal—the highest honour—to one of the nurses for her work in the enteric fever ward. A still greater reward was the gratitude of the soldiers.

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