

may threaten. If resolution cannot be induced, the proper course is to apply boracic fomentations, and as soon as pus is detected, free incision, under chloroform, is the recognised treatment. It is inadvisable to allow the abscess to burst, as it is improbable in this case that it will drain freely, and the breast may be destroyed.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

How would you deal with a case of suspended animation after submersion in water?

A HISTORY OF NURSING.

THE REVOLUTION IN FRENCH HOSPITALS.

IV.

The last chapter of the third volume of "A History of Nursing" tells of the revolution in French hospitals, beginning with a dramatic incident which took place in January, 1908, in the courtyard of the Hôtel Dieu of Paris:—"A little group of nuns of the Order of St. Augustine, the last ones left in the hospital, were about to leave it, as far as they knew, for ever. A long expected decree of the Municipal Council had made known to them the termination of their 1200 years of service there. For some time the laicisation of the hospitals had been going on, and the last ones to leave were the Sisters of the Hôtel Dieu. In silence they listened to the decree of banishment. With courteous kindness and real sympathy, the Director-General of the *Assistance Publique* of Paris addressed them in farewell words, endeavouring to lighten the heavy moment with conciliatory words of recognition for their long years of faithfulness. Those among them who chose to give up their vows, he said, might remain in their posts, due regard being had for their fitness, age, and length of service. Outside the walls a crowd had gathered. Some possible disturbance was feared, and the police were there. Sympathisers wished to take out the horses from the Sisters' carriages and drag them themselves, but this the police forbade. Presently the Sisters came out, entered the carriages, and drove away. One or two cries of 'Down with the Republic!' were heard, and several arrests were made before the groups dispersed."

The next revolution to which our attention is directed is that caused by Pasteur, who, as "a grave, sincere, almost shy youth of unobtrusive manners," came to Paris to study chemistry. "His studies in spontaneous generation, begun in 1860, resulted in his famous dictum, 'No life

except from previous life.' Whatever wonders science may yet have to discover, this dictum will always hold good in the practical details of the treatment of disease, and for the procedures of the nurse. He acknowledged reverently a remoter mystery which he did not attempt to solve.

"It was he who brought Lister's attention to the germs of putrefaction, and thus initiated the surgical revolution. Pasteur and Miss Nightingale were contemporaries—their early years of study and action were almost simultaneous. Each was a seer and prophet of health and of disease prevention. Like two noble pillars, the life, the work, the teaching of Pasteur and of Miss Nightingale stand side by side."

Miss Dock quotes at length from an article by M. Mesureur, Director-General of the Paris Hospitals, describing the series of changes which took place in the great Paris hospitals, and does full justice to the pioneer work of Dr. Bourneville, whom nurses attending the Paris Conference in 1907 will remember, "one of the most distinctive, and easily the most militant, among medical pioneers of hospital reform."

The work of the nursing school in the Rue Amyot, with Mme. Alphen Savador as President, is also noted.

Next we have an account of the fine work of Dr. Anna Hamilton, who "quietly introduced the 'Nightingale System' into Bordeaux and set the boundary line between two eras of nursing." Dr. Hamilton's work is well known to the readers of this journal, and space forbids quotation at length from Miss Dock's sympathetic appreciation.

One incident must be quoted:—"Oddly enough Dr. Hamilton, who was to introduce the 'Nightingale System' into France, was not permitted to use the wards at St. Thomas' for her observations, as she had hoped to do. But at St. Bartholomew's she found in Miss Isla Stewart a generous hostess, who gave her the freedom of the wards, and that she might not seem like an intruder, a broom to carry about with her."

The appointment of Miss Elston, who was trained at the London Hospital, to hospital work in Bordeaux, has its romantic side. She saw Dr. Hamilton's name and address in a magazine, and immediately wrote to tell her of her desire to work in France. By a curious coincidence, Dr. Hamilton had just written to the Matron of the London Hospital, asking for a head for the training school, and had received the reply that Miss Lückes had no one to send. Three weeks after receiving a personal offer

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)