

A HISTORY OF NURSING.

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ITALY.

A study of hospital conditions and schools for nurses contributed by Signora Celli to an Italian paper in 1908 showed that some 40 per cent. of the personnel of 1,241 hospitals were in religious orders. "As only ninety-three of these hospitals were bound by bequests or conditions, it was clear that they preferred the nuns. Their discipline was best; they were a superior class of women, and they cost the hospital least. . . . She found admirable exceptions to the usual low standard of nursing in the work of the Sisters of Mercy and the *Suore della Sapienza*, but emphasized the absolutely unhygienic conditions of the Sisters' lives. She referred to a circular written by Pope Pius X in 1906, in which he invited nuns to come in turn to a school of instruction founded under his auspices in Rome, and counselled them to lay aside artificial modesty and learn to be efficient nurses. Some orders could not, because of their rules, follow his counsel, but others were doing so, and were taking instruction from the professors of the University.

In 1909 Miss Turton writes: "New elements had now come into the campaign. Signora Maraini Guerriere Gonzaga, wife of a member of Parliament, absorbed the fundamental principles of pioneer reform, and became the Voice which we had all along needed. Italian, she knew the standpoint of her compatriots; in sympathy with the Princess Doria, Miss Baxter and myself, she gradually became the handle of the wedge, inserting it with such enlightened intelligence that the Polyclinic doors were finally opened to a real training school. . . .

"A sudden inspiration seized Princess Doria and Mme. Maraini. 'Let us make a desperate effort to get a real hospital block to nurse—Professor Bastianelli's—and get a nurses' home somehow in the Polyclinic.' Talked of in March, when the earthquake excitement had subsided a little, pushed, guided, lifted, dragged,—it was finally accepted by Queen, Government, and hospital authorities. . . . and on the 28th of February (1910) Miss Dorothy Snell, Miss Reece and I entered it. Perhaps the most remarkable feat accomplished by our committee was in securing the acceptance of a foreign staff as teacher nurses. As soon as Italians can be trained to replace the English contingent they shall assume the posts."

Thus we leave the history of modern nursing in Italy with the School at the Polyclinic under the patronage of the Queen, and bearing her

name, with Miss Snell as its capable Matron, the first group of pupils graduated, Committees in other parts of Italy organizing on the same lines, and nuns offering for training in the *Scuola Convitto Regina Elena* at the Polyclinic.

The roots of the new school, writes Miss Dock, "seem to be well set; the day is probably ripe for the success of a new era in the beautiful hospitals of Italy."

SPAIN.

Of Spain Miss Dock writes that it must be numbered amongst those countries where the idea of modern nursing is least comprehended, as evidenced by the story of a travelling American nurse, who was obliged to introduce herself as a "doctress" when visiting Spanish hospitals, as no one knew what a nurse was. Yet there, too, the first ground has been broken, and in the "Rubio Institute" near Madrid a school for nurses was first opened, and for a time thrived under the care of a German Sister, a member of the German Nurses' Association.

"The Institute was the creation of Dr. Rubio, who was a many-sided genius, farsighted, benevolent, and genial, besides being the most progressive and scientific surgeon in Spain. . . .

"In 1896 Dr. Rubio first undertook developing a school for nurses, and named it after St. Elizabeth of Thuringia. Genius though he was, the rules and organization of this school were as extraordinary as could be imagined."

The nurses, who were quite illiterate, were made as hideous as possible. "Their hair was shaved off, and dark purple woollen hoods, with ear flaps, and trimmed with yellow frills, were set upon their heads. The uniform was a dark blue striped cotton of shapeless cut, and on the breast was worn a large cross in yellow linen, with the name of the school on it in purple letters. A white apron was worn with it, and winter and summer the nurses had no stockings and only sandals on their feet." When we add that the pupils were not allowed to make or receive visits, that in addition to the nursing they did all the cooking, washing, and scrubbing, and that their work was changed every eighth day, the only wonder is that any women were found willing to accept the positions.

Under Donna Socorro Galan the conditions of service were improved, but the hours of duty still remained from 5 a.m. till 9, 10 or 11 p.m., with little time for meals, and night duty every third or fourth night, which meant 38 to 40 hours' continuous service.

"In 1910 the Director of the Institute was Dr. Gutierrez, physician to the Queen of Spain, and under his rule (through the Queen's in-

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