

## SCOTTISH NURSING.

## A HISTORICAL SURVEY.

It is curious how little has been put on record concerning the history of nursing in Scotland, and the greater, therefore, is the debt due to Miss A. W. Gill, R.R.C., Lady Superintendent, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, for the historical survey contributed by her to the third volume of "A History of Nursing," by Miss L. L. Dock, from which the following information is gathered.

"Unlike England, the hospitals in Scotland cannot trace their origin back to monastic times. During the Middle Ages the convents, and those establishments connected with them, were occasionally employed for the dispensing of medicines and the reception of the sick, but at the time of the Reformation the religious houses were swept away, and it was some time before the modern hospitals and infirmaries took their place. The oldest of the great hospitals in Scotland is the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, which was only opened in 1729, though schools of medicine and dispensaries for the sick poor flourished long before that date."

There is on record in an early history of this Infirmary the following quotation, showing how necessary the hospital is as a part of medical treatment:

"The Royal College of Physicians had attended for many years at their turns twice a week at their Hall to give advice to the poor gratis. Yet they have often had the mortification to see their advice and medicines prove unsuccessful by their patients not having due care taken of them, and by their want of proper diet and lodging."

The result was that public subscriptions were invited, and a house near the college taken and fitted up for an infirmary. A gentlewoman (Mrs. Nesbitt) was appointed Mistress or Housekeeper, and allowed to hire a servant or nurse for the patients, both (besides having reasonable wages) to be entertained in the infirmary. The Matron's "reasonable wage" was £4, increased on the appointment of her successor to £5. Her appointment was a short one; she was discovered to be guilty of "great

extravagancy" and dismissed for "charging more than she gave the patients."

The next Matron, Mrs. Waldie, and the first Resident, Robert McKinley, did not manage to keep the peace, and the hospital minutes enumerate the twenty distinct accusations made by Mr. McKinley against the Matron. For example:—"Not making the pudding according to the managers' orders (the recipe for this pudding is minuted!), keeping out six eggs and a pint of milk, and substituting water; only giving two baps to three patients instead of one to each; constantly entertaining friends, and giving them tea; making the sack whey into posset for her own use, and rough speaking to the patients. Both parties were admonished — Mrs. Waldie for speaking

harshly to a patient, one Maitland, and McKinley for interfering in the housekeeping department, and encouraging complaints from servants and patients (an indiscretion upon the part of the male sex not unknown in this day). Mrs. Waldie was completely exonerated from the charges of dishonesty, which were found to be 'false and malicious.'"

The temporary hospital was replaced by the old Royal Infirmary in 1738, and in the earliest rules, published in 1849, mention is made of the nurses. "There are rules for the 'Matron or Governess,' the 'ordinary nurses' and for the 'supernumerary

nurses.' The whole staff is quaintly named 'the family' in all the old records. The 'ordinary nurses' were evidently the ward nurses, one in each ward, and the supernumerary nurses were for those patients who required constant attention—night as well as day—and patients' friends were eligible to be thus employed, with the permission of the physicians. No mention is made of night nurses, and it is probable that the average patient was not supposed to require nursing during the night.

"The great principles which Miss Nightingale laid down as the groundwork of nursing many years later were not entirely unknown, for we find great stress is put on the necessity



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