

NURSES OF NOTE.

MAKERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

Of the names of those associated with the International Council of Nurses as Foundation Members none is more honoured than that of Sister Henrietta of Kimberley. The Council was founded, as we have seen, in London, in July, 1899, and the last letter received from her in this country before the Boer War was written in October of that year.

With the shadow of the Great War still upon us we realise what it meant to her to be shut up in Kimberley during the siege, which began on October 13th, and it was not until February 22nd, 1900, that the relief column rode in. Under such conditions it was, of course, impossible for Sister Henrietta to actively promote the new organisation, but it is much that it had the support of her name, and that she should have been fully acquainted, by her dear friend, Miss Watkins, who was in London during the inauguration meetings, as to the objects of the Council, and that it had her interest and approval, for the name of Sister Henrietta was one to conjure with in South Africa.

Her most important and abiding work for the progress of the Nursing Profession was, no doubt, that for the Registration of Nurses, for it was largely owing to her that nurses in Cape Colony were the first to be registered under an Act of Parliament (in 1891). Although this Registration was carried out under the Medical Council, and not by a separate Act for the Registration of Nurses, it gave impetus to the general movement, then in its early days, as well as being of great benefit in South Africa.

The late Dowager Lady Loch, wife of Lord Loch, appointed Governor and High Commissioner in South Africa in 1889, knew Sister Henrietta intimately, and subsequently edited her Life (published by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., in 1914), in conjunction with her sister, Miss Christine Stockdale.

Lady Loch wrote: "It is difficult to express in adequate words all I feel about Sister Henrietta of Kimberley and her magnificent work in South Africa. It was soon after our arrival in December, 1889, my husband heard from Mr. Rhodes, Dr. Sir Starr Jameson, Mrs. J. B. Currey, Bishop Gaul, then Rector of Kimberley, and many others of the

strong character of Sister Henrietta, who trained matrons and nurses for all parts of South Africa. . . .

"Every sort of person, from the Governor to those under him, used to appeal to Sister Henrietta for advice and help, and she always gave it so cordially. . . . She also helped much a few years after our arrival in collecting information to help the Bill through Parliament for the Registration of Nurses, which she felt was so urgently needed. She used to receive telegrams from isolated places just saying 'dangerous case of illness, send experienced nurse as soon as possible.' She did not know whether it was a surgical case or severe illness, and consequently it was no use to have a nurse whose qualifications or degree of fitness she had no means of gauging."

Sister Henrietta, who was born in 1847, at Gringley on the Hill, Notts, was the daughter of the Rev. Henry Stockdale, then Vicar of Misterton with West Stockwith, Notts. It is recorded of her that "her mind was deeply religious and literary, but her education for force of circumstances was very scanty—her mind was always reaching out for food, and there was very little on which it could feed."

Her interest in South Africa dates from 1863, when Mr. Twells was consecrated Bishop of the Orange River Mission, and, in 1873, she was definitely asked to go there, and worked there for the rest of her life. But first she had some training in nursing at the Clewer Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London, supplementing it later by further experience at University College Hospital.

The Carnarvon Hospital at Kimberley, for private patients, which she opened in 1877 by

request of Bishop Webb, soon became a household word in South Africa, and she received from the Governor a large bog-oak cross mounted in gold and fastened to a ribbon with the Government Seal, "in grateful remembrance of invaluable services."

District work, living in the tents of the people of the camp, when food was an excessive price, and the difficulty of living in those early days of mining often brought great misery and poverty, was her next experience. A visit home, and then once more charge of the Carnarvon Hospital, Kimberley, until 1894, when the Mission resigned the care of the Hospital, and Sister Henrietta moved into a house, which took the name of St. Michael's Home, with a staff of nurses, who were in demand in all parts of South Africa.



THE LATE SISTER HENRIETTA OF KIMBERLEY.
Community of St. Michael & All Angels.

By courtesy of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)