

NURSES OF NOTE.

MISS MINNIE DRAKARD, S.R.N., R.F.N., F.B.C.N.

Miss Minnie Drakard, F.B.C.N., who has just retired from the Matronship of Plaistow Hospital after 36½ years, is known throughout the infectious diseases nursing world, as one of its great pioneers.

She was trained at Boston Hospital and the Nottingham General Hospital. She was Sister at the latter Hospital, and there developed her interest in, and great love for, Fever Nursing. The wards in the Fever House were at that time used for cases of Typhoid Fever.

In 1893 she went to Taunton as Matron of the Isolation Hospital and in September, 1895, took up her duties as Matron of Plaistow Hospital. She immediately commenced a two years' Course of Fever Training, the first group of nurses being certificated in 1898. In 1901 the Hospital was considerably enlarged and became an important school for Fever Training.

With the late Dr. Bieracki she took a prominent part in the formation of the Fever Nurses' Association, of which she was the first Nurse President. This Association did much to raise the standard of training in Fever Hospitals and was the forerunner of State Registration in that speciality, the advent of which raised further still the professional education and status of the Fever Nurse.

At the beginning of 1915 Miss Drakard went to Dunkirk to organise the nursing of a hospital for the Friends' Ambulance Unit of the British Red Cross for cases of enteric fever among the French troops. For the past five years she has represented Fever Nursing on the Advisory Committee of the University of London for the Diploma of Nursing.

Miss Drakard has seen great development in fever work during the years that she has been at Plaistow Hospital, some of the most prominent being the introduction of serums, curative and preventive, the highly developed methods of "Bed-Isolation" and "Barrier" work, as well as the present-day skilled nursing of the common infectious diseases. The immunisation of the staff against diphtheria and scarlet fever has been another great advance in the work of a fever hospital.

It has always been a source of great interest to her to watch the development of Public Health work

generally, and particularly the advance in her own special branch of nursing.

Miss Drakard is deeply interested in nursing organisation, and is an active member of the Royal British Nurses' Association, of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain, the two pioneer Associations for nursing reform. She is also a Fellow of the British College of Nurses, and takes a deep interest in the progress of the International Council of Nurses and she attended the Quadrennial Meeting and Congress held in Montreal in 1929, and made an excellent report upon her return.

Miss Drakard feels that if she had her professional career to come over again she would happily repeat her experiences. Her colleagues are happy to know that now that routine duties are at an end, she will continue to take the same enthusiastic interest in Nurses and Nursing for which she has always been renowned. We know her as a woman of great charm of character and manner, the sweetness of her disposition alight at all times, and we all look forward to her continued interest and support for forward movements in the Nursing profession.

A great admirer of Miss Drakard wishes to render to her an expression of grateful admiration. When all the horrors of the Great War broke on the World, a friend asked her, "Do you think if I trained I would make a nurse?" Steps were taken at once to this end. The strenuous training achieved, the inspiration then came to apply to Miss Drakard, the Matron of Plaistow Hospital, for a Ward Sister's post.

The day of entering this well-ordered Hospital brought home to her the realisation of the joy of having found

her vocation. The atmosphere everywhere of pride in skilful work, the courtesy and thought bestowed on all, was so inspiring that she never ceased to ask why she had spent so much of her life in other spheres.

Alas! how short a span was given to this bright soul of the work she loved. During the great influenza epidemic in 1918, she was stricken down with this disease in its deadliest form.

She lingered for some months, but her sufferings were greatly relieved by the most skilful medical and nursing attention; no wish expressed was too small to gratify, her personal friends on the staff were chosen to nurse and comfort her, and so she passed. How fortunate to work under the sweet influence and kind care of Miss Drakard.



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