

after, on the day before Tel-el-Kebir, her private Secretary wrote by command to express to Mr. Childers her Majesty's views of the desirability of establishing a decoration for all nurses employed on active service.

From Sir Henry Ponsonby,

Balmoral, September 12th, 1882.

The Queen thinks it would be very desirable to establish a decoration for nurses who are employed on active service, and for those who assist them at home, and commands me to give you her views on this subject.

Miss Nightingale and a very few of the nurses under her and associated with her got a badge after the Crimean War: but that was only for that special occasion and very expensive, and not in the form of an Order, which the Queen now wishes to establish.

The badge or cross need not be of an expensive nature, and might be worn with a ribbon on the shoulder.

It should be granted to nurses sent out by the War Office and also to others who have made themselves useful in the field, such as the Bloemfontein Sisters, in whose praise you wrote to the Queen last March.

Her Majesty would wish to confer this decoration on the nurses who served in the South African Wars as well as on those now in Egypt.

To Sir Henry
Ponsonby,
War Office,
September 14, 1882.

May I ask you to say to the Queen in reply to the command contained in your letter of the 12th instant about a decoration for nurses, that I will lose no time in considering the question, which, however, may require a good deal of inquiry and thought. Do you happen to be able to give me, or to tell me where I can obtain, any information of the St. Katherine's foundation, of which William Ashley used to be the treasurer, and which at his death was, I think, utilised, by her Majesty's special wish, for nursing purposes, to some extent? No one here has any information on the subject.*

From Sir Henry Ponsonby,

Balmoral, October 23rd, 1882.

I did not mean to convey to you that the Queen preferred

*An elaborate account of this Charity will be found in the Commissioners' Report 1837, vol. xxxii, Part ii; p. 860. It was founded by Matilda, with the consent of her husband, King Stephen, in 1148, on the East Side of the Tower, and was originally intended for a master, three brothers, Chaplains, three Sisters, and six poor scholars. In 1826 the Hospital sold this site to the Dock Company for £127,000. Statutes for the Hospital were made by Lord Somers in 1698, and Lord Lyndhurst, 1829. In the latter year it obtained a grant of property at Gloucester Gate, Regent's Park. The present objects of the Charity are to provide—(a) Home and pensions for ladies and gentlemen. (b) Education for thirty-six boys and twenty-four girls, to be admitted between seven and eight years of age. Apprenticeship premiums of £10 are paid for boys when fourteen. The Hospital is now also the Central Office of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

a "decoration" for nurses to an "order" because I do not clearly understand the difference.

Both must be conferred under certain regulations, and both are honours given by the Queen.

In your letter of the 22nd you suggested that some of the nurses should receive pay from St. Katherine's Hospital. This would bring them under the regulations of that Hospital and therefore I used the expression "civil nurses."

Your proposal that the cross should be granted to nurses engaged in time of peace is a good one.

It is considered very desirable that "those who have assisted at home" should be included.

Would you take into consideration the rules it would be desirable to make for this order or decoration?

The Queen has had a cross made as a model. Her Majesty is not quite pleased with it and will make some alterations. I send it to you to look at.

N.B.—Those who have assisted at home would include the Queen and the Princesses.

To Sir Henry Ponsonby.

Cantley, December 12th, 1882.

I send you a draft of the Royal Warrant which I propose

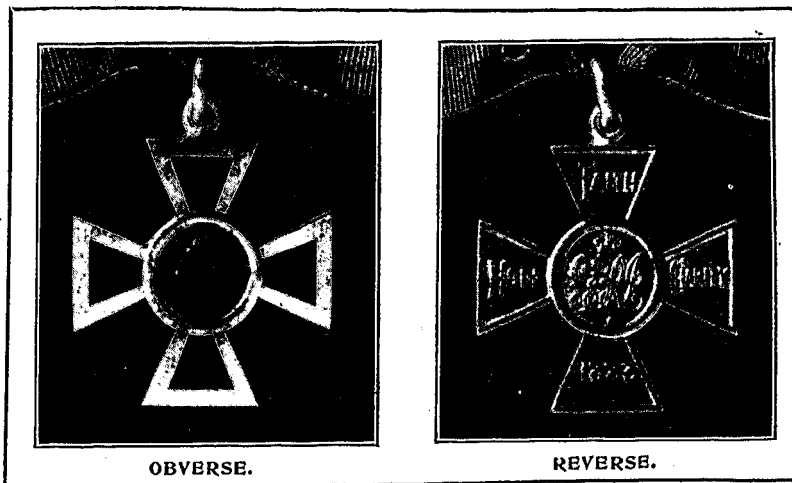
to submit in due course for her Majesty's approval, establishing the new decoration for nurses. The title has been a difficulty with us: but, upon the whole, I don't think that anything can be devised better than the "Royal Red Cross." The Red Cross has now been adopted by the whole Christian world as the symbol of aid to the sick and wounded in war; and it is the badge of our own Army Hospital Corps. You will observe that it may be conferred on princesses or any

ladies for special services in providing for aid to sick and wounded soldiers and sailors, and on nursing sisters, whether serving in the field or in hospital.

I would strongly urge that the statutes of St. Katherine's Hospital should be simultaneously altered so as to admit of pensions being granted to a limited number of the new *décorees*. This would have a very good effect in showing that the object is both titular and substantial.

There has been of late a good deal of remark about the additional orders and decorations recently founded, but nothing is so popular as the grant of small pecuniary boons to persons of the humbler class for good service.

The Royal Warrant which instituted the decoration was promulgated on the 23rd of April, 1883. It states that besides the Princesses of the Royal family, the Royal Red Cross may be conferred upon any ladies who may be recommended to her Majesty's notice by the Secretary of State for War for special exertions in providing for the nursing, or for attending to sick and wounded soldiers and sailors; and it may also be conferred on any Nursing Sisters who may be similarly recommended for special devotion and competency, displayed in their nursing duties with the Army in the field, or in the Naval and Military Hospitals.



THE ROYAL RED CROSS.

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