

REMINISCENCES.

BY REBECCA STRONG.

Mrs. Strong's reminiscences are sure of a welcome in the Nursing Profession and we are glad that she has yielded to persuasion to publish a few and so permitted nurses of the future to have some record of her great pioneer work for the advancement of nursing in Scotland. In commencing, she pays tribute to the scattered members of the nursing profession who work under adverse conditions, some in the slums, some in isolated parts of the Highlands and Islands and others in remote parts of our far-flung Empire where they cope with inadequate material and appliances and the necessity often for travelling over long distances under very trying conditions. They are "true missionaries," says Mrs. Strong, "in the best sense of the word."

Mrs. Strong traces the evolution of modern nursing to the impulse of Florence Nightingale, but emphasises the fact that nursing reached its present position through no sudden evolution. To judge from these reminiscences the groundwork of high ethical and moral standards were laid in those earlier days, and a short practical training and a few simple lectures have developed into the very comprehensive educational curriculum of the present time. Mrs. Strong pays a tribute to Mr. Whitfield, the resident Medical Officer at St. Thomas's Hospital, for his interest in nursing education in those early days, and she has an amusing story to tell of how she was once caught in the act of taking a temperature for a surgeon and was severely reprimanded "for doing students' work." There is something rather attractive in the reference to the system of having two nurse pupils "told off" on Saturday morning to make cakes for Sunday tea, for the custom suggests a homeliness and intimacy unattainable in the great institutions of the present time. They were versatile ladies, those of the earlier generations of nurses, for we find that sometimes a pupil nurse was "told off" to trim the bonnets; the outdoor uniform in those days at St. Thomas's consisted of a bonnet and shawl.

The writer tells us something of the staffing of the hospitals, which seems to have been inadequate enough in the light of present demands and customs, and she also deals shortly with the commencement of reform in the arrangements for army nursing after the Crimean War. We like the picture she gives us of an enlightened Medical Superintendent of the Dundee Royal Infirmary who succeeded in securing single bedrooms for the nursing staff as well as a dining-room and sitting-room. Mrs. Strong tells of her efforts to develop nursing in the Royal Infirmary of Glasgow, of which she was appointed the Matron in 1879. She managed to introduce one reform after another for the benefit of the nursing staff but the demand for a "Home" for the nurses proved to be the proverbial "last straw." The controversy ended in Mrs. Strong's resignation, but in 1892 she agreed to return again to office, this time with freedom to develop those ideas which made her the doyen of the nursing profession in Scotland.

This brochure is a valuable little contribution to Nursing History from over the Border. We wish that Mrs. Strong's syllabus of instruction for her preliminary school of nursing, in connection with her hospital, might have been incorporated with it. The work serves to emphasise the gradual enlightenment, as the years pass on, of those who are responsible for hospital administration in so far as the educational and other requirements of the nurses are concerned. It indicates too—and this may in part be the purpose of the publication at this time—what a beacon of light Miss Nightingale's School proved itself to be, shedding its light and inspiration, in a practical sense,

even so far as the Island Continent of Australia, and that very soon after its foundation.

The little book is written for private circulation, but we have no doubt that for those who desire to have a copy Mrs. Strong would make this possible.

INVITATION.

Miss Swaby Smith will be "At Home" to Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association and to Fellows and Members of the British College of Nurses on Thursday, March 5th from 4.0 to 6.0 p.m. at 194, Queen's Gate, S.W. She asks that they will regard this notice as an invitation to be present.

FIXTURES.

The following fixtures have been arranged and we hope that many Members will find it possible to attend. On Friday, February 14th, at 3 p.m. at our Headquarters, Dr. Ernest Dore, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., the well-known skin specialist, will give us a lecture on diseases of the skin, which will be illustrated by lantern slides. The lecture is sure to be of interest and to contain a great deal of new and up-to-date information on what is a very important special branch of nursing; therefore we look forward to having a large audience. On Thursday, February 20th, at 3 p.m. Major Rigg will give us a lecture on the Tower of London. Major Rigg is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, a great historian and scholar on ancient London, and his lectures always prove most popular at the R.B.N.A.. At the close of last year we commenced a series of Rambles on the Tower and its surroundings and we propose to continue these on Thursday, February 27th; those who wish to join in the ramble should meet at the entrance of Mark Lane Station at 2 p.m. on that date. Full details have not yet been arranged, but we intend to visit the ancient church of All Hallows (which has again so recently escaped demolition) and the Church of the Holy Trinity in the Minorities, with its strange relics. We hope, also, to have time for a visit to the Royal Mint.

OBITUARY.

The death of Lady Collins, wife of Sir William Job Collins, which occurred at her home in London on January 29th last, will be keenly felt in many circles.

Lady Collins was trained at the Victoria Hospital for Children, Chelsea, and also at the London Temperance Hospital, where she was for many years a Sister and where she met her eminent husband, whom she married in 1898. She was always specially interested in the nursing of sick children and in the surgical side of nursing.

After her marriage she threw herself heartily into the municipal, political and educational work of her husband in London. Elder daughter of the late Mr. John Wilson, M.P. for Govan, she inherited from him a zeal for the temperance cause.

It is with deep regret that we have also to report the deaths of Miss Julia Ellen Killick, Miss Sarah Mullett, and Miss Agnes Spring, all, including Lady Collins, were Founder Members of the Association.

Miss Julia Ellen Killick lived for nearly 30 years at East Grinstead where she was spoken of as "the lady with the heart of gold." She gave very generously to charity and this mostly under the cloak of anonymity. Miss Mullett was for many years nurse to her late Majesty, Queen Victoria.

194, Queen's Gate,
London, S.W. 7.

ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)