

In 1851, inspired by the desire to do all that she could for the relief of sickness and suffering, she went to Kaiserworth to learn of Parson Fleidner. The sufferings of the soldiers at the Crimea touched her heart. She asked for volunteers to go with her to take care of the sick and wounded; and a hundred women volunteered. This formed the first corps of nurses ever sent to the battle field to take charge of the sick and wounded. How nobly those women worked, how bravely they endured hardships, and with what self-sacrifice they cared for the wounded and dying soldiers is written on the page of history.

When Florence Nightingale returned from the Crimea, the English people subscribed £50,000 as a testimonial for her benefit. Many of you have, no doubt, read of what she did with it. Instead of devoting the money to her own personal use she founded, in connection with St. Thomas' Hospital, the first training school for nurses in England.

After that the march onward, under the direct inspiration of this talented lady, was rapid. She had many brilliant pupils, and none more so than Mrs. Dacre Craven, who devoted herself largely to ascertaining how far nursing and instruction, in the art of general care for the sick, could be carried out in the homes of the poor. As the result of the investigations of a committee, to which she acted as secretary, the "Metropolitan and National Nursing Association" was formed in 1875. The object aimed at was to provide trained nurses for the poor. The Duke of Westminster was appointed chairman. At the first meeting a very important resolution was adopted—a resolution which has been far reaching in its effects—at least over all English-speaking communities; this was upon the recommendation of Mrs. Craven herself, namely, *To recruit the nurses entirely from the class known as gentlewomen.*

This looks like an arbitrary regulation; but when you examine it closely, its reasonableness and wisdom will be apparent to all. The reasons are these:

1. In nursing the poor in their own homes, nurses were placed in positions of greater responsibility in carrying out the doctors' orders than in hospitals.
2. That women of education would be more capable of exercising such responsibility.
3. That the vocation would attract a large number of ladies anxious for some independent employment.
4. That they would naturally have a greater influence over the patients.
5. That their social position would tend to raise the whole body of professional nurses to a higher plane in the consideration of the public.