

We all know that an ounce of help is worth a pound of sympathy, and however independent the nature of a Nurse may be, she cannot close her eyes to the fact, that, in spite of the vast network of charitable and benevolent Institutions, nothing is provided for herself, and she sees—

“Water, water everywhere ; but not a drop to drink.”

This fund might act in two ways :—

- (1) Loans in sudden emergencies ;
- (2) Free gifts to meet pressing necessities.

Imagine a Nurse called to the death-bed of a relative at a considerable distance from her sphere of work, and think of the strain on her slender means, especially if she has just incurred the expense of her annual holiday. Suppose, too, that up to date she has been able to pay into some insurance office, but this sudden call has rendered further payments impossible, and her policy lapses in consequence. Now, if the Nurse knew where to turn for sympathy and help in a crisis of her small affairs—if, for instance, she could borrow a sum of money without fear of a refusal or lecture—it might make all the difference to her success and comfort in life, both present and future. This subject might be enlarged upon with advantage, but the space given is limited, and I must proceed, for the chain of usefulness is not yet complete, and a further link must be added in the shape of

HOMES OF REST,

situated in healthy country or sea-side places, to which Nurses recovering from sickness, or to avert a threatened break-down, could be sent. A small weekly sum might be required to cover expenses of board and lodging, but this should be strictly regulated in proportion to the Nurse's earnings. Of course there would be some few cases in which the Benevolent Fund might play a very important part, for the strong should strive to bear the burdens of the weak, but I feel assured such cases would be in the minority. This system of the one Institution helping to support another reminds one of the great principle on which “Les Asiles de la Force” were founded. The Homes are no doubt familiar to many of my readers, and at first sight the Schools, the Widows' Asylums, Orphanages, and Penitentiary would seem to represent an enormous expenditure ; but, on closer inspection, the working and management is proved to be based on the most economical principles, each Home being bound over to assist and help the others ; and it is a very encouraging thought, that, when the first stone was laid, the only *pièce de résistance* was a quaint, large-hearted French *pasteur* and his slender stipend to fall back upon.

We must not linger another moment over the Nurse temporarily ill, for we have yet to deal

with a far more difficult subject—how to render efficient aid to those incapacitated (*b*) by chronic illness, because the help has to be spread over an indefinite period, and often the poor sufferer outlives all the sympathy, while the necessity for help remains the same. The question naturally arises, what considerations must regulate assistance to chronic invalids ; and so many side-issues are involved in the answer, that the would-be helper finds it difficult to steer his course through the shoals and quicksands which beset the way. For convenience it may be as well to classify chronic cases into (*a*) those totally incapacitated from earning a living and dependent on strangers ; (*b*) those partially able to help themselves, though debarred from Nursing ; (*c*) those who have relatives willing and able to help them. The more thrifty and business-like Nurses become, the less likely are such helpless ones as Class A to be in the majority. Urgently would I impress on every Nurse the duty of thinking seriously of her future. It will not take care of itself, as many of us appear to think. It is possible to save something out of the smallest income, and though a Nurse's earnings are ridiculously small, “where there is a will there is a way,” and the very word earnings, which I have used in preference to the more polished and refined word “salary,” has a whole world of significance in its meaning ; its original Saxon form, *earnian*, signifying not only to gather, to reap, but to store up, to harvest. Then, again, there is such a difference in people. Some are so easily incapacitated, so easily rendered helpless, hopeless, and homeless ; whilst others, however severely “marr'd and maim'd” in the struggle for existence, will yet battle on with praiseworthy determination. It is the class of people with only one idea who are so difficult to help when from any cause their one idea is played out—the Nurse who in that capacity showed herself active and efficient, but cannot on occasion make a good cook, or companion, or lady-help, or courier ; either her position or dignity or place or ignorance—to call the spade by the right name—standing in the way, and in the meantime the tide of opportunities rolls back and the Nurse is stranded. After all, these helpless ones appeal to our sympathy, and they must have no cause to wail that “'twas all in vain, the waiting and the watching and the prayer” ; rather let each do their utmost to support the Benevolent Fund, because for these there is no other way to help save by a voluntary free gift.

Between the two extremes, of the Nurse dependent on strangers and the Nurse who can fall back on relatives, we have Class B—those partially able to help themselves if opportunity presented. How would it do to establish a Record

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