

A TOPIC OF THE DAY.

BY MARIAN C. PINCOFFS, M.B.N.A.

NURSING having become a topic of the day, it necessarily follows that the subject has given rise to much discussion; and it equally follows that a vast amount of nonsense has been both talked and written bearing on the matter, not alone in relation to its theory, but regarding its actual practice also, and the most mistaken and misleading statements and suggestions are constantly appearing in print. The magazines and the newspapers, lay and professional, are inundated with articles on Nursing subjects, and the latter especially are apt to carry on hostilities. With regard to the training of the Nurses of the future, a controversy, hot and strong, is raging also, and the whole question, both broadly and in detail, seems to bristle with difficulties.

Outsiders smile and say it is a "craze" of the present day, and will die a natural death, as other "crazes" have done before it. Enthusiasts indignantly reply that, considering the nature of the "craze," and the momentous consequences involved in the questions at issue, this can hardly prove to be the case.

Here we have an article teeming with the hardships endured by Nurses at a given Hospital, and there another lauding the special virtues of this Matron or that. In one place we are told of the risks and dangers arising from half-trained women tending the sick, and in another we learn all that is being and has been done to raise the standard of Nursing in our own time, and to eliminate from the ranks of its army unworthy soldiers. It may be that we are all—the public and Nurses alike—too impatient and too ready to forget that time is required for the consolidation of all things. The kingdoms that have risen highest are those that have passed through much difficulty and tribulation first. "We rise by the things that are under our feet." Assuredly of nothing is this truer than of our experience as Nurses, whether as individuals or as a profession generally. In good sooth we must buy our knowledge—it may be hardy and at some cost. No management, however efficient, no personal qualities, no training, however faultless or well carried out, will enable us to dispense with the cleansing fires, which the experience of time alone can light. That crying abuses do exist, both as regards public institutions and Private Nurses, no one with any knowledge of facts would attempt to deny. That things are intensified in some instances by the arbitrariness and cupidity of individual Matrons on the one hand, and by the incompetence and carelessness

of individual Nurses on the other, there seems little reason to doubt. Granted, however, that this is so, the remedy is difficult to find. History repeats itself, and every movement in its infancy has uphill work; its "staying" power proves its strength. Mistakes are sure to be made, faults there must be, but to come to a just conclusion an average must be arrived at. There can hardly be a question that, taken as a whole, the last few years have seen so great and enduring improvement as in everything connected with Nursing. The past is irrevocable, the present is the outcome of the past, but the future lies before us. It remains with each of us to meet it bravely, endeavouring to do our best in whatever rank of the profession our own place lies. To bear, and to forbear; not to judge too hastily of the actions or motives of others, not to cavil and fret because they may differ from the view we take as to the best means of meeting the difficulties that surround our work and the cause that we love so well. Striving each to do our duty, and thus individually help to solve the problem that for the time being at least seems past finding out.

"But Right is Right, if God is God,  
And Right the day must win;  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin."

NURSING ECHOES.

\*.\* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith.

VERY many happy returns of the day to the British Nurses' Association, to-morrow. It will be three years then, since the meeting of the forty Hospital Matrons was held which decided to found the Association, and as most of my readers know, each birthday since has been celebrated by a *Conversazione* as delightful as popular. I hear that the gathering to-morrow is expected to be as successful as either of its predecessors, and that between nine hundred and a thousand Nurses and their friends are expected to be present. I am asked, by-the-bye, to mention that there are still a few paying five-shilling and half-guinea tickets to be had by application to the Secretary, at the offices, 8, Oxford Circus Avenue.



I AM told that Nurses from nearly every part of the country are expected, so that the sight should,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)