

nurses as one factor in the general improvement which is going on in society at large.

At your last Convention it was stated that there then existed 221 Training Schools in the United States and Canada. To-day that number is probably considerably increased, and whether the individual schools be great or small, each is busied in teaching, training and sending forth annually from two to fifty young women, in the aggregate several thousands in the year. But where the work is properly done, these women are not only rendered competent to take charge of the sick, but are added to the number of those in our midst who have had the advantages of a thorough training in the sterling virtues of obedience, self-control, perseverance, accuracy and economy. In every way the endeavour is made to develop in the pupils those traits which go to form character. Many who come to us purposeless, undisciplined and dependent, go away at the end of their term of training, strong, skilful, capable, resolute women, able to stand alone and to help others to do likewise. In looking at our training schools as places in which women are prepared to care for the sick, we are apt sometimes to underestimate the value of what they do for the nurse herself.

District nursing has also made advances, which will undoubtedly become much more rapid and effectual as soon as the public can be awakened to an appreciation of the manifold advantages of the system. To raise the standard of life, the standard of motive must be elevated; and the work of reforming the conditions of existence in the homes and families of the masses cannot be better undertaken by any than by those who can bring a healthful influence and a practical example to bear directly upon them. The district nurse does not simply fill those, with whom she comes in contact, with vague longings for better things. She brings them hope for this life as well as for the next. She shows them exactly how a more wholesome life can be led beginning from to-day. Provided she be the right woman, she can do more for the improvement of the household and family than all the sermons or tracts that were ever written or distributed.

I need not at this time refer in detail to the value of the work of the graduate nurse in the community, although it is of serious moment and is worthy of careful consideration. Nearly a century ago, in making an apology for the trifling nature of the pursuits of women of that day, Sidney Smith defended them to a certain extent by saying that women were really excluded from all the serious business of the world. It is interesting to fancy what he might have to say, could he speak at the present day, when women are grappling with some of the most serious problems the world has to meet. "Civilisation itself," says Emerson, "is simply the power of good women"; and I have always believed him. To hasten the advent of a period when culture shall be general, a utopia which seems to be dim and distant, even at the close of this famous century, larger opportunities are afforded to none than to us.

I am hardly old enough in this profession to indulge

DELICIOUS	MAZAWATTEE	TEA
DELICIOUS	MAZAWATTEE	TEA
DELICIOUS	MAZAWATTEE	TEA
DELICIOUS	MAZAWATTEE	TEA
DELICIOUS	MAZAWATTEE	TEA

A Guarantee of Purity.

much in the pleasure of looking backward. While grateful for the larger opportunities of the present day, I feel that I have missed much, and am sometimes envious even, of the difficulties of those brave pioneers who have borne the burden and the heat of the day, and have brought order out of indescribable chaos. No thought of reward had they—but I think they must feel a very pardonable pride in seeing the high standard of excellence which obtains at present in many of the training schools throughout the country. It has been my privilege to know some of these women, and through them to have learned something of what may now be called the history of nursing in this country, and thus to realize through what difficulties the present condition of our schools has been reached. Much has been done, but much remains to be done, and as I have not justly earned the privilege of going over past work, let me ask you to look with me for a moment at one or two of the many questions by which we are confronted at the present—questions which concern problems which appeal to us most strongly and are deserving of our earnest consideration.

Our day is a new day, and the rules and traditions of yesterday do not meet our needs. We must be capable of living up to every possibility which the present offers, and at the same time bear always in mind the alterations which the future will demand. At no time, and in no country, perhaps, have more numerous and greater opportunities for usefulness been offered than here in America in the present decade. The whole land is a fair field. There is as yet a career for every good nurse that we can send forth. In saying this I am quite aware, and the fact must be evident to all of us, that we have to deal now with a profession whose ranks promise to become overcrowded. The reason is of course very plain in the light of the early history of training schools. Given a profession which was easily entered, demanding a comparatively short time for preparation, two years, occasionally only one, requiring considerable physical and small mental equipment, and when acquired, fairly lucrative, the result may be predicted with scientific precision.

In looking about for some help or suggestion toward the avoidance of this evil, we naturally turn for comparison to the profession of medicine, with which nursing is so closely allied. Though still wrestling with the question of uniform standards of examination and preliminary education, it will be found that the simple, and by no means ineffective, method of dealing with the question of overcrowding has been to lengthen the time of instruction, by adding one, and in some cases two years to the prevailing course, and at the same time to eliminate a certain number of unsuitable men by increasing the difficulty of the preliminary examinations. Fewer and better men were needed in the medical profession, and admirable indeed have been the results of the measures taken. The history of medicine the last half century is interesting in this connection. It has witnessed the upspringing and the flourishing, and is now beginning to see the decay or final disappearance of an enormous number of those inferior medical colleges whose diploma has been an article to be supplied at a minimum of labour by those who had the granting of it, and to be obtained by the student at the smallest possible expenditure of time and money. Of course I do not deny that good men have come out of these institutions. But surely this can happen only in

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)