

Matron of her own training-school or of another hospital, and may help, ten years hence, in working out that organisation of the profession to which all the best in it aspire. She may serve the State as a member of the Army Nursing Service, or under the Poor Law may help in the gradual levelling up of the work-house infirmaries. Should she wish to go abroad, India and the colonies still demand our best, while nothing less should be given to the problems which confront the district nurse, whether in the slums and alleys of our great cities or in the remoter rural districts.

And while the individual, if fully equipped and competent, is sure of employment herself, she will be the more ready to help in the solution of the many difficult problems which confront the profession and in the removal of the blemishes which mar its usefulness. The nurse's natural leaders still suffer too much from professional narrowness; strong in their position as the heads of the great training-schools, they too seldom look beyond their own four walls, where all, they think, is for the best in the most ideal of institutions. But the great training-schools are not, as a matter of fact, the only portals of the nursing profession; almost every place, public or private, where the sick are nursed offers a training and very often a certificate of a sort, and all who consider the point disinterestedly are agreed that this should not be. Yet who is to determine what constitutes "training"? How are those who use the term unfairly to be penalised? How are the smaller institutions to obtain a nursing staff, except at ruinous expense, if they may not train their own? These questions demand solution in the public interest and in that of the nurses. Again, the interests of the pupil-nurse are not always identical with those of the institution where she obtains her training; in some cases the old tradition that the probationer is merely the servant of the charity is so pressed that the service exacted is out of all proportion to the instruction offered in lieu of an equivalent in money. Once more, there is the vexed question of the adequate control of the private nurse, that member of the craft from whose conduct the general public forms its opinion of the whole profession, judging it too indulgently or too harshly according to the good or evil fortune of the individual patient. More technical, yet no less important to the public, is the debated point whether special branches of nursing, such as the care of lying-in women or the nursing of fevers, which are now always treated apart from the general hospitals, may wisely be entrusted to women who take only such special training, or should such training, as in the case of doctors, be granted only to those who have already had their general training? These and kindred matters are debated continually among those who have to consider the welfare of the nursing profession and its relation to the community; and all the discussions show the need for more enlightenment and more public spirit among nurses themselves. It is difficult to carry out the smallest reform, because, as has been hinted, even the best professional opinion is apt to be biased and narrow, or self-satisfied and indifferent to evils which lie just outside its own immediate sphere. Therefore we plead for more education—not more technical education—that at its best is now excellent; but that the special knowledge of the nurse should rest on the sound and wide basis of general cultivation.

We wish that the daughters of the professional classes, when they choose a career for themselves, would prepare themselves seriously for that of a nurse, by cultivating first all their intellectual powers; then when they select their training-school they should ascertain where the best teaching is to be had, remembering that the good provincial hospitals are not in essentials inferior to the London schools. Having gained admission, they will remember that the junior probationer (whatever her extraneous advantages) is still the least important person in the hospital, and will accept that position with a cheerful philosophy which the absorbing interest of the new life will render easy of attainment. And when the training is complete, a vast field of usefulness will lie open before her; for the good nurse who adds to her skill a well-stored memory and a cultivated mind, and to these a disciplined character, will be welcome and helpful in whatever branch of nursing she chooses to undertake.

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### The Nurses' National Total Abstinence League.

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A large gathering of nurses assembled on Monday afternoon at Surrey House, Marble Arch, by kind invitation of Lady Battersea, who presided, and, after giving to all present a most gracious and friendly welcome, explained the object of the meeting. Lady Battersea told how the Nurses' National Total Abstinence League, under whose auspices the meeting had been arranged, was formed to gather those of the nursing profession together to fight intemperance wherever their work might lie, and expressed the hope that new members might be gained that afternoon by the words of counsel from Sir Thomas Barlow, who had so very kindly come in response to their invitation, and whose presence was felt to be so great a support to their cause.

Sir Thomas Barlow then gave a very interesting and practical address to the assembled nurses on the subject of the effects of alcohol on the human system, and for many and well-explained reasons advised total abstinence from the use of it in the strongest terms.

During the afternoon a programme of songs, recitations, and 'cello solos was charmingly rendered by Miss Emmeline Chant, Miss Margaret Dillon and Miss Agatha Gray, which was much appreciated by the audience. After a refreshing cup of tea and feast of strawberries, many of the beautiful contents of Surrey House—a veritable fairyland—were made especially interesting by the descriptions and explanations Lord Battersea gave as he took parties round the magnificent rooms. It is hard to say which part of the programme was the most enjoyable or most enjoyed.

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