

the task of elevating and improving the nursing profession as a whole.

We were the first to recognise that a whole profession cannot be governed solely for ever by a sentiment, however beautiful, but that, when that sentiment had worn thin, those deadly enemies of women's work—hypocrisy and affectation—would take its place.

We really did work hard. I had at that time a large workhouse infirmary on my hands by which I honestly tried to do my duty, whilst in my spare time I hammered away at articles for the RECORD or speeches for the B.N.A., or lived in the Underground, on my way to committee meetings. The others were equally handicapped: we worked at our own duties in office hours and spent our recreation time in trying to further what we believed then, and what I believe now, were the best interests of nurses and the nursing profession. And we did it with great enthusiasm.

Of course we met with opposition at first, to my great surprise, for it seemed to me that we were so absolutely and incontrovertibly right that all opposition must be quite puerile and arise simply from ignorance, from a want of knowledge of our motives and desires.

Gradually one came to accept opposition as inevitable, and to divide it into two classes—that which was honest and had its roots in pure conservatism, a firm clinging to tradition, an opposition that arose from an inability to grasp the necessity for change and growth even in good things, well-meaning folk who could never understand

“The old order changeth, giving place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

Very honest and very bearable. Let none sneer at the good that is old and conservative because it cannot follow the swift flight of modern progress.

Then there was the other opposition that was unfair and unjust; it was afraid, and, like all things that are afraid, it was cowardly and cruel and untrue. But both oppositions lay outside our Association, and all was harmony in the camp.

There were great public meetings like that at St. George's Hall; there were social gatherings which were a revelation to us in their good fellowship and kindness, and the delight of meeting old friends (they are a commonplace now, they were new then); there were committee meetings that developed our business instincts, and there was no question but that we were all of one mind on all important matters. Those were great times. I look back upon them now with pleasure. One worked double tides, but one felt so keen, so alert, so eager to play one's little part in regenerating one's own world. One appreciated George Eliot when she says that there will always be those who desire to create and not

merely to look on, and who say, “I am lord of this moment's change, and will charge it with my soul.” It may have been a trifle conceited, but it was genuine, and universal brotherhood or sisterhood seemed within our grasp as far as the nursing profession was concerned.

I will not call to remembrance the details of the wretched strife that wrecked our harmony; let the dead past bury the dead. Perhaps it was inevitable; anyhow, we paid dearly for our initial mistakes. It was a sad time when differences of opinion were followed by hostile factions and open warfare at our meetings.

Then gradually the older members largely left an Association with which they were no longer in sympathy, and voiced their views elsewhere. But those views remained the same and unchanged; we have held to them always, and they will triumph and be acknowledged, not only because they are ably voiced and championed, not only because they have been clung to tenaciously through good and evil days, but because, above all, they are true, and truth must prevail.

If we have lost in freshness and enthusiasm, we have gained in experience and toleration, and there is not one of us who was connected with the R.B.N.A. in its early days who does not hail with delight the fact that the Association has at last promoted a Bill for the Registration of Trained Nurses.

M. MOLLETT.

Proposed Sanatoria for Tuberculosis.

The first report of the Executive Committee which was appointed last spring by the National Committee for the Establishment of Sanatoria for Workers Suffering from Tuberculosis, at a meeting held at the offices of the Metropolitan Hospital Saturday Fund, has just been issued. It shows that, from inquiries made by the Statistical Sub-Committee, there appears to be no doubt that much further accommodation will be needed if the spread of tuberculosis is to be arrested. The Sites and Building Sub-Committee, who for some time past have been gathering particulars with respect to a suitable site and the erection and maintenance of sanatoria, now recommend the erection of a sanatorium for 200 patients, and that a proportion be reserved for women. The estimated cost of building and site is about £50,000, and the cost of maintenance about £65 per annum per bed. The success of the scheme, the Committee consider, will depend upon the co-operation of the friendly societies, trade unions, and the patients themselves.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)