

Hospitals and sick rooms of the refining influence, keen intelligence, and quick sensibility of the more highly educated Nurses of modern times.

Still there *is* a reverse side of the shield. Nursing has become a fashion—nay, more, almost a craze; and the result is, that many most unsuitable women, in all ranks of life, “go in” for Nursing. As a consequence, the world is flooded with so-called “trained” Nurses, many of whom are, and always will be, untrained in even the alphabet of the art, in its highest sense. Nurses of any experience know only too well that no technical training, however long, or however thorough, will make such understand the responsibility of the work they have undertaken.

From a financial point of view the matter is becoming serious. Many Nurses begin to fear that all hope of obtaining appointments in England will soon be at an end. Once again money—or more likely in this instance the want of money—is at the root of the evil. In the “race for wealth” of the present day, Hospitals, like individuals, are anxious to do the best for themselves they can, both in the way of making and saving money; and the result is that, to a certain extent at any rate, other considerations go to the wall. Paying Probationers are very profitable, and so also are those women sent by Institutions to be trained for private work. Often, in both cases, the moral, mental and physical qualifications of the individual for a Nurse are not sufficiently inquired into beforehand, or sufficiently sifted and considered during their training, and so the end alluded to, is arrived at. Doubtless it is very easy to find fault with the existing state of things, and it may seem presumptuous for any individual to attempt to do so; but many fellow-workers would sadly acknowledge, how often they are troubled and distressed by the unnurselike ways, and ideas, of some of the women now engaged in Nursing the sick; also how hard it is becoming to obtain vacant posts, or even Nursing work, when training is ended.

The old rhyme says—

“For every evil under the sun
There is a remedy or there is none;
If there is one, try to find it;
If there is none, then never mind it.”

Mind it we must, however, in this case, whether the remedy is to be found or not; but the effort to find it lies far beyond us as individual Nurses, and must rest in more experienced hands than ours. Possibly those in authority in the Nursing world will be able ere long to grapple with the growing evil of unsuitable women continuing to be trained; but even so, there would still remain a problem to be solved. Many of the best Nurses of the present day, and those whose influence for

good in all ways is practically unlimited, do *not* require the money their work brings, and, as a consequence, their fellow-Nurses who *do* require it, suffer.

A way of, in some degree, meeting this difficulty has been suggested by a patient, herself desirous of becoming a Nurse, whose circumstances, both socially and financially, place her outside the pale of Nursing as a profession. Her idea is, that a want would be met on both sides if, at the end of their training, some Nurses, who could afford it, would join together and form an association for nursing in their own homes (without fees) those who, though refined and educated people, are too poor to obtain the assistance of paid Nurses—who shrink from the publicity of Hospital life, and yet are far above the class of cases that come under District Nurses’ care.

A great and good work seems a possible outcome of such a suggestion—to some it might come as a heaven-sent voice, to make a tangled path of duty plain. How to embody and carry it out may in the future be the life-work of some noble woman anxious to help others on their voyage through life.

It may be, too, that Nurses have yet again to learn a lesson of faith and patience. The unturned pages of the future may teach us, ere long, that as there is no unmixed good, so also there is no unmixed evil; that which seems so to us in our blindness, may yet prove the starting point of a source of consolation to many. The clouds, too, which mar the brightness and shadow the future of the Nursing profession may soon be lifted, and the difficulties which interfere with the work be at an end.

“O doubting heart,
The sky is overcast;
Yet stars shall rise at last,
Brighter, for darkness past,
And angels’ silver voices stir the air.”

THE BRITISH NURSES’ ASSOCIATION.

WE are requested to state that the *Conversazione* will be held at the Grosvenor Gallery, New Bond Street, W., on Friday, December 7th, at 9 p.m.; that admission will be by card only, which must therefore in every case be given up at the entrance to the gallery; that Members can obtain a free non-transferable card for themselves by application to the Hon. Secretaries, and cards for friends, ladies or gentlemen—professional or not—by forwarding postal orders or cheques for five shillings for each to 20, Upper Wimpole Street.

EVERY good deed that we do is not only a present pleasure, but a prop for the future.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)