

So far as the British Nurses' Association is concerned, the wisdom of the step they have taken is, we presume, apparent to the least thoughtful or most ignorant person. The idea has been driven deep into the public mind that the Association necessarily comprises the best Nurses; and in a very short time, we venture confidently to prophesy, the most common test as to a Nurse's standing will consist of the question, Are you a member of the Nurses' Association? and if the answer is No, the questioner will probably account for the fact by a reason which will hardly be flattering to the interrogated Nurse. By all the rules of ordinary life, one would be justified in presuming that, if a Nurse does not belong to her own and only professional Association—which numbers not only the leaders, but all the *élite* of the rank and file, of the Medical and Nursing world—the reason probably is that she is not considered fit for membership.

In this important way, therefore, the *Conversazione* has, we believe, enormously strengthened the power of the Association, not only by clearly manifesting to the public its strength and success, but by drawing to itself scores—if not hundreds—of Nurses, who are anxious to belong to a union which can organise and carry through such a great scheme for their profit or their pleasure; and probably scores—if not hundreds—of other Nurses who, though perhaps not desiring anything to be done for themselves individually, are either glad to be able to assist an Association which has proved its capacity and its desire to help its members, or, perchance, are afraid that if they do not speedily obtain admission, they may shortly find that membership is beyond their reach, and that they are hopelessly left out in the cold. In all these ways, therefore, we see that this great gathering possesses a wider significance than is at first apparent.

But there are two other points of view to which brief consideration must also be accorded. The Association has proved, beyond doubt or cavil, two most essential facts—that it can originate schemes for the benefit of Nurses; and that it can carry these into effect with the greatest *eclat* and success. There are some—as ignorant of Nurses as, providentially for most, but unfortunately for a few, Nurses are of them—who would have us believe that women who risk their lives and health daily, in attendance upon others, women of education and refinement, or at any rate of strong common sense and intelligence, actually grumbled because, six months after the formation of the British Nurses' Association, they individually had not received anything beyond their cards of membership in return for their thirty pence. How proud and happy those fictitious Nurses must be

now, to reflect that for their half-crowns each has received an entertainment which she could not have obtained herself at a cost of half-a-guinea. We only mention this ridiculous *canard*, however, to remark that we are heartily glad to find the Association, even at this early period of its existence, proving its earnest desire to promote the pleasure, as well as the profit, of its members.

How successfully the idea was carried out is described in other columns, and has been told by nearly every paper of any note in the Metropolis. To draw together Nurses from all parts of the United Kingdom, leading representatives of all classes, inclusive even of overworked men of business; to entertain more than one thousand of such guests; carry out a three hours' programme of amusement with exact punctuality; and to send everyone away interested and pleased, is a feat of which any association might well feel proud. All this, and much more, was done by the British Nurses' Association. It has celebrated its first birthday right royally and well, and we earnestly, and with profound admiration, wish it "Many Happy Returns of the Day."

THE BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

OUR influential contemporary, the *Daily Telegraph*, recently contained the following editorial:—

"Amidst all the wrangle concerning what is woman's true mission, to what trade, craft, or profession may she belong, what art she may practise, to what political position may she aspire, or on what Board she may sit, one point has never been called in question—her heaven-born gift and right of being a Nurse. The Nursing instinct is strong in all women, but in some it is developed into positive genius, and there are those who take with loving intensity and earnestness to their noble profession. It is one of the strangest and most beautiful of the miracles of humanity to find that the gentle ones, who by nature shrink from pain, and dread the sight of suffering, should be, as it were, clad in the armour of mercy, and given the power and the nerve to witness the terrors of difficult and dangerous operations, or the slow progress of fatal disease. Thus they become, by ever-watchful help and kindly wisdom, the 'ministering angels,' who are the Doctor's right hand, faithfully carrying out his behests, loyal and devoted to their trusts, standing, so to speak, sentries at the gates of Death. The touching side of the picture needs no close word-painting; one has but to enter the silent Wards of any of our great Hospitals at night—those refuges whither

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