

at home." What is needed by the public at present is the knowledge that the very best that they have to give of daughters is what our training schools for Nurses will accept—the most beautiful, cleverest, brightest, and best of the whole bunch. No work absorbs more of the great virtues than attendance on the sick, and the great virtues take deepest root and flourish best in the richest soil.

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THE sick have an octopian capacity for absorption; nothing but the loveliest in woman's nature will satisfy them—the most gracious sympathy (here no words are needed), the most unfailing patience, the strictest self-command. How they peer, how deep they probe, those poor wandering, watchful eyes! Do not lie to us—they seem to plead. There is seldom deception between those that suffer and those that serve. What is needed between these two, before all things, is truth.

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HER Royal Highness then gives the public a gentle hint how they may repay "the debt of gratitude they owe to a devoted and skilled Nurse." She writes:—

"And now I must say a few words as regards the Benevolent Branch of the work of the Association. I have already mentioned that one of its objects is to provide for the comfort, relief, and protection of Nurses in times of trouble. It is needless to add that the income of the Corporation, which is not a large one, sets a limit to our efforts in that direction. And yet so much of the administrative work is gratuitously performed by men and women who believe in and trust the Association, and are devoted to its objects, that not less than a fifth of the income is expended every year in grants made to members who have been laid aside by illness, and need rest and change of air and scene, or who, through no fault of their own, have fallen into straitened circumstances. This work is scarcely, if at all, known outside the office, for it is carried on under the seal of secrecy, but it would be impossible for me to express in words any accurate estimate of the comfort, help, and relief, which it brings to suffering bodies and anxious minds.

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The Association is therefore an efficient organisation for the distribution of mutual aid. What is available for the purpose comes from the pockets of Nurses and medical men, and to those of the former who are most in need of it, it returns in streams of comfort and kindness. I am very anxious that the public should be better acquainted with this branch of the work of the Association, because I cannot help thinking that many patients, recovering from sickness, who realise the debt of gratitude they owe to a devoted and skilled Nurse, would gladly direct their thank-offerings to the increase of the slender resources available for our 'benevolent' purposes."

It must indeed be gratifying for the members of the Association to know that so much of their yearly subscription is devoted to help their fellow-nurses in times of need.

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A MATRON writes: "I was glad to see your 'Echo' in last week's issue *re* correcting slips for the forthcoming issue of the Register. I hope it may bear fruit. If the Register is to be of professional value,

it must be absolutely correct, and each Nurse is asked to take an infinitesimal amount of trouble to make it so, and that trouble for her own personal benefit. How about the *labour* of the Registrar? —the books, the notes, the changes, the corrections. When I look through the closely-printed columns of the Register, I cannot help comparing her weeks of work with the moment's consideration demanded to make the books reliable, which she politely requests from those for whose benefit she works."

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TOUCHING the question of a "Nursing coach," an energetic Lecturer of the National Health Society writes: "I do not think you will have to gaze down a vista of many years before the Nursing Coach is an accomplished fact; indeed, it appears to me to open out a new and remunerative line of work for women. I have made inquiries at the majority of the London Nurse-training schools, and find there is not a vacancy for a Probationer in some for months, in others for years, and yet at one and all, Probationers are admitted without any educational or technical test, and few admit them before the age of three-and-twenty. Why should not the intervening year after application and before admittance be usually spent in acquiring knowledge which would make the new Probationer of more value than she is at present? A year's systematic instruction in the elements of anatomy and physiology, in chemistry or sick-cookery, and in the use of the much despised needle, would save many a break-down from an overstrained nervous system, in the first year's probation in a hospital ward, where young women are expected to absorb clinical instruction, attend lectures, and clean the ward at the same time. The present *system* is fatal to *thoroughness* in any one branch. Let our Matrons thrash out this question 'in Council.'"

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THIS "overstrain of the nervous system" is a very real evil in some of our Nursing Schools under the present *régime* of education; and it is scarcely possible for the outside public to estimate the daily anxiety and vast responsibility of the Sister of a ward, who is not only responsible to the medical authority for the efficient nursing of from thirty to fifty patients—many of them critical cases—but who is at the same time responsible to the Matron and Committee for the practical education and training of her subordinate Nurses. When it is remembered that many of these subordinates are women of very defective education, and that part of their training consists in attending scientific lectures and studying for difficult examinations, it is not difficult to grasp the fact that the curriculum, as at present practised, might be modified and improved by preliminary study.

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