

loving interest. From this noble idea has gradually developed the system of District Nursing as we now know it.

Among other Institutions which grew up, there was founded in 1875 the "Metropolitan Nursing Association," which had for its first Superintendent Miss Florence Lees (now Mrs. Dacre Craven), and for a supporter the great leader among Nurses, Miss Nightingale, and whose headquarters were at Bloomsbury Square.

In 1887 the Queen at her Jubilee determined to devote £70,000 of the money presented to her by the women of England towards the further development and encouragement of District Nursing, and an Institution was then founded called the "Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses," to which the Metropolitan and many other Nursing Associations became in time affiliated—the Inspector of the Queen's Institute visiting and inspecting all branches so affiliated, thus keeping up the very high standard of Nursing required by this Institute—which Institute pays all the expenses connected with the training of their Nurses either at the Central Home at Bloomsbury or in other approved branch homes.

The main principles of the Queen's Institute being that Nurses should be women of education, that their work should be carried on entirely under the directions of a qualified medical man, and that the work should be strictly undenominational.

I have not enough knowledge to enable me to speak of the many other Associations doing good Nursing work among the poor, but I should like to hand on to this Conference a suggestion which was a short time ago given to me by one who has the welfare of the Nursing cause at heart—that some person with leisure should make this cause a study, should endeavour to collect all possible information about every existing Nursing body—working collectively or individually—comparing their organisation, method and rules, thus bringing together a mass of valuable facts which would greatly advance the working of District Nursing as a whole, and would also help each Nurse to become acquainted with and understand far more than just the one system under which she herself is working.

The training of a District Nurse should be of the best and fullest kind. She will meet in her work difficulties which are never encountered in Hospital. Much of her work has to be carried on under very trying circumstances, such as none but those who know the real insides of the homes of poverty can even imagine to have any existence.

Her training should have been a life-long training—begun long before it is time for her to

enter a Hospital for her special training. The training I mean is that of the character. A woman who intends to take up this calling should ask herself whether she has sufficient education, whether she possesses love, sympathy, tact, patience and conscientiousness, whether she is daily aiming at increasing these qualities, or whether she neither possesses nor desires to possess them—in which latter case it were far better that she should take up other work which would not need the exercise of such qualities so constantly as will the calling of a District Nurse. She will work much alone, and the real success of her work depends more on her own character than on any other factor. She requires to keep before her always a high standard, a lofty ideal.

During her training in Hospital she should pass through every ward—medical, surgical, obstetric and children's ward—not neglecting the out-patient department, where she may learn a great deal that cannot be learned in the wards.

The training in the District Home is also of the greatest value and importance. There she will learn, under the teaching of the Superintendent, how to set about bringing her skill into practise under conditions so different to those of a Hospital ward. She must there learn by experience how to nurse the sick with the help of very poor appliances, or sometimes with none but those which her own ingenuity can devise. There, too, she must learn how widely she can influence all those with whom she comes in contact.

What a great and grave responsibility here rests on the shoulders of the Superintendent of each Nursing Home, to give both by example, as well as precept, a high and noble view of the work to which she is training her Nurses—teaching them also what a wide field of usefulness is open to each beyond her actual duties carried out at the sick bed. What is the wider aspect of this work—the wider usefulness of which it is capable?

A Nurse may, and should, teach lessons of purity, cleanliness, sanitation—lessons which will bear fruit long after the sickness itself is forgotten. She may be a messenger of light and air in many a dark home. She may teach many a lesson of patience, forbearance, of thrift and economy, by her words and by her work. She may awaken and stir up the spirit of brotherhood and sympathy, giving most practical illustrations of her own willingness to put out her hand to help or improve all those with whom she comes in contact. Surely there is hardly any limit to the good that may be done by a Nurse, as she quietly goes her round of ministrations among the sick poor.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)