

to endure it; and there are many who choose gentle, unskilled nursing, with its discomforts and risks, in preference to a Trained Nurse, who would never smile at them, and in whose nursing there was no heart; but the value of a Nurse whose heart is not only in her work in its technical sense, but in her body in a gentle and humanising sense, is beyond all words. And this latter kind of Nurse is not only an ideal: there are many unknown to fame, decorated with no order of merit, some of whom belong to the humbler rank of life, with whom it is a real pleasure—aye, and a lesson—to work; the fragrance of whose sweet, unselfish lives purifies the atmosphere, heavy with sickness and with sin.

I am aware that this inward grace is a great deal to demand, for "Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city," and it is a lighter task to become skilled in a profession than to overcome faults of disposition and temper, and during our training in a Hospital where patients receive nursing gratuitously, and are therefore not in the best position from which to remonstrate, we are in danger of forgetting the importance of the latter in concentration of our attention upon the former. Good temper and gentleness are invaluable to everyone, will sweeten any bitters, smooth, brighten and cheer any rough and thorny pathway, as we all well know; and to recommend them is like recommending sunshine, but in good nursing they are essential, and we can all advance their rule by weeding our own mental garden, and by helping each other weed, water, and plant seed.

If we remember the importance which, in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, is given to the virtue charity (in the revised version rendered love), we shall have some conception of its real value, for "Love never faileth; but whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away." So that the proficiency which by study we have acquired (and I do not desire or intend to depreciate it) shall melt like the smoke; and the loving kindness, the gentleness, the patience we have perchance neglected to cultivate, would have endured for ever. And before closing I should like to say a few words on the reverse side of the question.

The public have a right to kindness from their Nurses, but has not the Nurse a claim to kindness from her employer? She enters the house a stranger, prepared to take its chief anxiety upon her shoulders, and while she is giving the care, the help, the sympathy so valuable, has she not a claim for consideration, for a kind word, and for courteous treatment, and does she always receive them? I have heard of a Nurse, tired with a long night watch, being called more than once from her rest during the day, because the patient liked her

handling best, and required some trivial adjustment of the bedding. In a time of sickness, every energy of the relatives is strained for the welfare of the sufferer, and when recovery crowns the effort, they feel that rest and relaxation are essential, and have been well earned. But the Nurse goes from one battle to another; she has only to readjust her armour to enter upon a fight, perhaps even more fierce and prolonged, with the dread enemy; and from thence to another, and so on, through the best years of her life; and while this is her chosen work, ought she not at least to have some little appreciation of what she is, and what she does? A Nurse who does not respond to kindness has not the true spirit of nursing; but a Nurse who does not receive the kindness that, however great the anxiety, can as easily be shown as discourtesy, has just reason of complaint, and though the "charity" that I have quoted "seeketh not her own," there is more probability of its failure at a subsequent case than if it had been appreciated.

Finally, does not the Nurses' Association bring within our power the possibility of helping each other as we never could before, of knowing each other, of meeting each other, with a common interest and a common love—the love of sick mankind? And when we meet, can we not take counsel together, rejoicing that we are no longer scattered units, but a strong body of friends, interested in and caring for each other, working with and for each member; for if one suffer reproach, all the members bear reflected stigma; and honour to one is honour and rejoicing to the whole.

A. B.

NURSING ECHOES.

. Communications (duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith) are especially invited for these columns.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, accompanied by the Empress Frederick, Princess Beatrice, and the Princesses Sophie and Margaret of Prussia, paid a visit to the Royal Isle of Wight Infirmary at Ryde. The Royal party were conducted over the new wing, and in the presence of the Committee and the Medical Staff the wing was declared open. The illustrious visitors then proceeded through the different Wards, and addressed kind and sympathetic words to several of the patients. Her Majesty and the Empress Frederick both expressed themselves highly gratified with their visit, and with the arrangements of the Institution, which receives patients from all parts of the island. Before leaving the Queen graciously accepted a bouquet of white flowers from the Matron and the Nurses. The Royal party all inscribed their names in the visitors' book.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)