

## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING.

Someone has said, "The great use of intercourse with other minds is to stir up our own, to whet our appetite for truth, to carry our thoughts beyond their own tracks."

We have met together to study questions of mutual interest, to get light from those who can impart it, and also, as the Scripture puts it, "to be ourselves ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

As has already been stated, Canada is less experienced in the work of nurse-training schools than is our sister country, and yet it may be a matter of surprise to some that Canada claims to have organized a school for nurses prior to the organization of the Bellevue school.

## THE FIRST SCHOOL.

In the winter of 1873, a school originally intended to be a Church of England Sisterhood, was established in St. Catherine's, a town of about 10,000 inhabitants, situated on the southern side of Lake Ontario, about twelve miles distant from Niagara Falls, the native town of the president of the society, and the adopted home of two other members of this Association.

A lady superintendent, two trained nurses, and two probationers were brought over from England. These, together with one Canadian probationer, made up the entire school. Two of the number were placed in the General and Marine Hospital, and the others in Springbank, a private sanitarium in charge of the late Dr. Mack. The school was named the Mack Training School for Nurses, and still exists under that name. It has at the present time ten nurses in training, and has graduated in all seventy-five nurses.

Beyond the establishment of this school, no further real advance was made in the Dominion, until ten or twelve years subsequently, when a school consisting of a superintendent and sixteen nurses was organized in this city in connection with the General Hospital.

## WHAT THE WORK IS.

Our work, however, as nurses, is to-day the same as when the first school was established, only based on broader, and, let us hope, more intelligent lines. Our primary aim still is to care for the sick, the helpless, and the suffering, in hospitals and in the community. We find cause for rejoicing, however, in that, while our work is eminently practical, we may, without egotism, be regarded in the light of handmaidens of science. Science, indeed, has wrought much within the last score of years, but is it not also true that the success which has crowned her efforts to some extent, at least, within the realm of scientific medicine and antiseptic surgery, has only been possible through the attention to details that is the requisite of absolute cleanliness, and the intelligence and care brought to bear in their administration, such as is found under a perfected system of nurse training? Writers, not a few, in this Victorian jubilee year, when called upon to recount the benefits which have accrued to mankind during Her Majesty's reign, have not failed to mention the advent of the trained nurse.

## THE NURSE A MISSIONARY.

Hospitals and sanitariums have multiplied the world over; district nursing and nursing settlements are spreading rapidly in all our large centres, and why? So good an authority as the late Dr. Lusk said: "There is no such efficient medicine for the sick as

tidiness, system, and order, and because of these things, the poor now eagerly avail themselves of hospital privileges. Where in old times sullenness and fear prevailed, now serenity and peace are to be found, for the poor know that they will receive the same watchfulness—the same consideration—that is commanded by the rich in their homes."

Every trained nurse who appreciates her privileges and lives up to them becomes at once a missionary and a reformer in the true sense of the word. It is said that the Chinese Viceroy recently stated that of all the foreign forces that might be employed to conquer China, the only one likely to succeed was the trained nurse as a missionary.

True, many of the problems which have confronted us in the past are as yet unsolved.

We are still wrestling with the question of overcrowding; the ideal nurse, of whose virtues poets have sung from decade to decade, transformed into such from what is popularly styled by the laity the "born nurse," so numerous and easily attainable in fiction, and such a *rara avis* in the experience of the anxious superintendent, is still the "will-o'-the-wisp" which we are diligently pursuing. We are still anxious to find some means by which the people receiving limited incomes may share in the benefits which trained nursing confers, without pauperizing the individual or underbidding the nurse. And we are still seeking to ascertain the best method of preventing the constant influx into our ranks of partially trained women.

## BUT REFORMS ARE EVER SLOW.

Ruskin tells us that: "If a good thing can be done at all it can be done easily. But it is in that kind of ease with which a tree blossoms, after long years of waiting."

In this connection let us, for our partial encouragement, turn to an article which appeared in *Chambers' Journal* in May, 1865, entitled, "The Nursing Profession in England. The writer in speaking of the ill-conditioned women to be found on almost every staff of hospital nurses, goes on to say:—"The supply of desirable women is always far short of the demand; in fact, it is with a feeling akin to despair, that persons who are aware of the truth look about through society and see the need of hundreds, nay, even thousands of qualified nurses.

"Here and there, it may be hoped, one and another among the pupils may be pointed out by the authorities as qualified to be head nurses, and possibly among hundreds some one may disclose the capacity of being matron or trainer of nurses.

"It will be a great marvel to our children's children that such a state of things could exist a quarter of a century after Mrs. Fry opened the first School of Nursing, and ten years after Florence Nightingale returned from the Crimea."

## TRAINERS OF NURSES.

That a marked increase in the percentage of women capable of acting as "trainers of nurses" has undoubtedly taken place within the last thirty years, since the above paragraph was written, witness such a gathering as the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses.

Moreover, when we consider that only three years have elapsed since the question of higher standards and greater uniformity began to be discussed, we

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