

believe in it, as the germ of that great organization of trained nurses to which they look forward in the coming century as the inevitable result of the evolution of the trained nurse. All transition periods are times of trial, of sifting the real from the unreal, of proving the stuff of which men and women are made, and in such periods it is more especially needful that those who are in the fore-front of the battle, should have opportunities of meeting and consulting with one another.

To Superintendents of Nurses the Matrons' Council has, for the last five years, held out the right hand of fellowship, and has invited them to co-operate for professional purposes, and also has afforded a means of social intercourse between them. The position of Matrons is frequently very isolated, and there are many matters upon which they would gladly take counsel with their colleagues. The gatherings which take place from time to time under the hospitable roof of the Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, have proved a real refreshment and pleasure to many of the members, and the public conferences which have from time to time been held have been of the greatest value, as affording opportunity for debate, so that it can fairly be estimated who is able to voice the needs of the profession at the present time.

LATTER-DAY NURSING.

ITS SPIRIT.

So much has been written about Nursing in these latter days that it might be well to pause and consider—whence it came, and what it is. We read of the "nurse of the past," the "modern nurse," and a terrible picture has been conjured up by the proverbial obstructor of the "scientific fiend of the future."

Truly, the woman worthy of so sweet a name has been in all ages of the same true and tender temperament, of the same fine physical force, and moral calibre, instinct with the same unfailing sympathy, and yet modest withal. Time and place are of no material consideration, vital woman has been since the world began, and it is very improbable that science will discover means to supplant the instinct of motherhood, or the false issues of so-called civilisation will find the means to eliminate the spirit of nursing from the impulses of women. This being the case, we must realise the fact that in the past, as in the present, the true nurse has existed.

It is but narrow argument to state that under certain conditions, or systems, all women who cared for the sick, did so inefficiently, as it is to argue that under any circumstances or conditions all women will be efficient nurses. But the Spirit of Nursing has been with us through all the ages, and, so long as women listen to its holy inspiration, so long may we hope that methods and means may be found to improve their trained service to the uses of the sick and suffering. In these latter days of rapid evolution, the old fashioned motherly tenderness of women may be somewhat out of date, yet it must be carefully conserved by all those who hope to become efficient nurses. A good nurse is, beyond all things, a comforting personality, and it is from the deep wells of human sympathy that her face reflects its beauty, her hand finds its cunning, and her few words their charm.

THE GARDEN OF NURSING.

How are all the gracious qualities of womanhood to be turned to the best account for the use of those in need? They must be trained and cultivated, not merely planted in congenial soil, and there left to sprout, or run to seed. There must be skilled handling, timely tending and refreshing, careful training, judicious pruning, and sure enough the blossom and the fruit will appear in due season.

And the Lady of our Garden of Nursing, what responsibility and great joy are hers when she watches the blossoms budding and the red fruit ripen on the tree!

ITS PRACTICE.

And so with the flower and fruit of human endeavour, the woman who is instinct with the spirit of nursing stands before you. She comes laden with good things, and offers them graciously in both hands—her fine energy and buoyant health, her gay, undaunted courage, vigorous intellect, and her surprising genius for drudgery—but you cannot take for the common uses all this wealth and give nothing in return, and so it comes about that as she gives so it is your duty to render to her again—not a thousand fold, for in return for the fine flower of womanhood you have little of adequate value, but you can during the arduous hospital training conserve her health, and stimulate her courage, train her intellect, teach her the value of order and organization in the saving of labour, and inspire her with the sense of personal responsibility in her relation to Life.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)