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Editorial.

THE WORK OF ONE THOUSAND WEEKS.

The present issue of this Journal is its one thousandth number. It will not be inappropriate for us to indulge in a brief retrospect of the changes which have taken place in the nursing world since this Journal first saw the light, on April 5th, 1888, and of the part which it has played in bringing about those altered conditions. In the first issue of the NURSING RECORD, as this Journal was first named, prominent mention is made of the fact that the British Nurses' Association had just been founded, and that other important nursing movements were about to be commenced. The conditions of nursing education, and those under which nurses worked only 20 years ago, will scarcely be credited, perhaps, by those who are entering the nursing profession at the present day. At the time of which we speak there were comparatively few hospitals in the whole of the United Kingdom which maintained the present methods or standard of training. The great majority, led and influenced by St. Thomas's Hospital, considered one year's training quite sufficient. Many others were more than satisfied with two years, and only thirty had the standard of a three years' course and regular examinations. Many of the hospitals throughout the United Kingdom gave no regular certificate of training at all, whilst it was even more true than it is at the present day that any woman could term herself a nurse without having received any professional education at all. The nursing staffs of many hospitals were much restricted in number, their salaries were very small, their food very insufficient, their bedroom accommodation usually consisted of part of a room or of inferior cubicles. It was a usual experience that they were overworked and underpaid.

PRIVATE NURSING.

In private nursing, the evils were glaring. On the one hand, the public had no means of judging whether any given person was a trained nurse or not, and thousands of women who had never been in a hospital at all were engaged in attendance on the sick. On the other hand, trained nurses had no protection of any sort against these women who usurped their title and the remuneration to which they were justly entitled. The public and the trained nurses alike having no means of protecting themselves, London and other great cities contained a number of nurse-farms —Homes started as a rule by men or women ignorant of nursing matters, and often very careless of the public safety. These Homes admitted women, often without any scrutiny of their character, and certainly with a complete disregard of their professional qualifications, and sent them out to the public, terming them thoroughly trained nurses, and charging the public for their services from a guinea to a guinea and a half per week. They paid these women salaries varying from £20 to £25 a year, in many cases justifying themselves for their meagre payment by the fact that many of the women so employed were without professional knowledge. Of course, the results of this system were disastrous to every interest concerned except to the nurse-farms, which made great profits by thus deceiving the public, and sweating the workers. Well-trained nurses were the greatest sufferers, because they found themselves competing, after years of arduous hospital work, with persons who would take any pay, however small, because they knew their services were practically valueless. The public were grossly deceived because they received the services of ignorant and often worse than useless attendants instead of the skilled workers for whom they asked and for whom they paid. Nurses could do nothing to help themselves, or to expose the evils of which they complained, because they had not a single organisation of their own, and no means of expressing their views or protecting their interests. The British Nurses' Association, then, was the first effort to bring about reforms. In the words of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, its objects were "to unite British nurses

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