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EDITORIAL.

NURSING IN THE INDIAN EMPIRE.

The question of Nursing in India is so vast, that, though it is unquestionably an obligation of Empire to provide for the efficient nursing of the sick throughout the country, the problem of how to achieve this must be approached from many sides if it is to be efficiently solved.

First there is the maintenance of hospitals; of importance not only for the care they give to the sick, but also because they provide the training ground for nurses. Invaluable and necessary as is the work of British women in India, if nurses are ever to be provided in sufficient numbers for the whole population, it must be through training the women of the country, and sending them out well equipped with knowledge which will enable them not only to nurse the sick, but to teach the elements of hygiene and sanitary science.

One of the great demands in India is for private nurses, and, in addition to those supplied by such Nursing Associations as the ones connected with the St. George's Hospital and the Jamsetji Jijibhai Hospital in Bombay, we have the Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association, which endeavours to meet the demand for private nurses in most parts of the Empire, the Madras Presidency, where Lady Amthill established the Association which bears her name with such good results, and the Bombay Presidency being exceptions. The Association, the work of which is limited by want of funds, has heavy expenses to meet in supplying nurses from this country, but their services are greatly appreciated, as evidenced by the constantly increasing demand for them.

It is to be noted that at the last meeting of the Central Committee of the Association held at the Viceregal Lodge, Simla, it was stated that the type of nurse now demanded by subscribers with her high standard of qualifications, both professional and social, could not be obtained at the rates hitherto in force, and the Association had therefore been compelled to increase its charges.

Another branch of nursing which has not, so far, been systematically organised in India, is district nursing, and yet, in no country would the work of district nurses be more valuable. For the Queen's Nurse with her three years' certificate, and special training in hygiene, the laws of sanitation, and work in the homes of the poor in this country is, as has been well said, the nurse of the home as well as of the sick person, and her introduction into the homes of the poor in India, would be of the greatest possible benefit. Indeed, Miss Creighton, who has had wide experience of nursing in India told the Nursing Conference in Dublin, that if 1,000 district nurses, working under a Government Service could be employed in India she believed that they could do what the Government itself has not been able to do, stamp out the plague.

It is quite certain that given nurses of the right type thousands of lives of the poorer classes might be saved. This seems a magnificent sphere of work for India's own women, in the future, if once established on the right lines, and no trouble would be too great to inaugurate a district nursing service under the authority of the State, with unlimited opportunities of development, and with a message of hope for the women of India, and the possibility that barren lives, devoid of interest, may be changed into those fruitful for the good of the community.

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