

will, therefore, get a far more effectual result in this way than if you merely soaked your sponges in a solution of sulphurous acid.

(To be continued.)

PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION.—XII.

GIVE REASONS FOR OR AGAINST THE IDEA OF A BADGE FOR MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

BY MISS MARIAN C. PINCOFFS.

MOTIVES, instincts, and feelings are hardly reasons, and yet, possibly, they all play a larger part in influencing our desire for, or against, a badge, than reasons in the strictest meaning of the word. And just because this is so, the task of defining and putting upon paper what it is that sways our opinion in the matter becomes more difficult. All of us who have joined the British Nurses' Association, have done so surely because we consider it a desirable thing to belong to that body, because we approve of its *raison d'être*, and of the objects it has in view. This being granted, the natural sequence evidently is, that to some extent, at any rate, there is a satisfaction in our minds at having been admitted as Members, and at having been in a position to be considered eligible. Human nature is human nature still; and because a woman is a Nurse, it does not at all follow that she is therefore free from small weaknesses, and indifferent to the standing she takes with those by whom she is surrounded. It is only natural, then, that many should feel pleasure in the idea of possessing a distinctive symbol of belonging to an Association of which they are proud to be Members.

It is difficult to understand how those who, by joining the British Nurses' Association, have, so to say, committed their interests to its keeping, becoming one with it in all ways, and have made the motives which gave it birth their own, can yet object to wearing an outward and visible sign of having done so. To go further, one might also assert that unwillingness to openly identify oneself with a movement to which one has deliberately given assent is often a form of cowardice, and also that the desire to keep in the background, and free from outward show, *may* spring, not from dislike of ostentation so much as from reasons more akin to "the pride that apes humility," than to humility itself.

Now, before we go further, what is a badge? and what is the strict meaning of the word?

The "Imperial Dictionary" defines it thus:—"Badge: (1) A mark, sign, token, or thing, by

which a person is distinguished in a particular place or employment, and designating his relation to a particular occupation, as the 'Badge of Authority'; (2) The mark or token of anything, as the 'Badge of Bitterness'; (3) An ornament on ships near the stern, decorated with figures."

What we are contending for, therefore, is "a sign by which a person is distinguished," designating his relation, not in this instance to a person, but to a professional body, which, though yet in its infancy, will some day make its mark in the world, and which is another outcome of the grand work carried on by Florence Nightingale many years ago.

It is always most unpleasant to even seem to oppose a friend—and, in good sooth, the Editor of the *Nursing Record* may be looked upon as a friend, even by individual Nurses. We all know so well, and feel greatly, how much he has done and is doing for us, to forward our interests in all ways, over and above the fact of his being the mainstay of the paper which is so useful to us all, which helps us practically in our work by many a useful hint and new idea drawn from its pages, and keeps us, too, in touch with our fellow-workers, scattered far and wide. It must not, therefore, even seem to savour of ingratitude if, on the surface, at any rate, many Members of the British Nurses' Association are not at one with him in the matter of a badge. We may possibly console ourselves for the semblance of a quarrel by remembering that the German proverb tells us "Der sich neckt liebt sich," and also by the fact that open hostility often ends in the firmest friendship.

To discuss our differences, then. The Editorial of June 6th is, to begin with, certainly at fault in saying that, supposing a badge to have been sanctioned, it must necessarily be either "showy," or "conspicuous," to be effective. "A primrose by a river's brim" is, unquestionably, *not* a gaudy flower, and yet it has come to hold a very different significance in the present day to the one it had for "Peter Bell" in the years gone by. The argument, too, put forth in the same article, that the possession of a badge, or rather that the wearing of it, might injure individual Sisters and Nurses with individual Committees and Matrons, is surely a very weak one, and implies, to say the least of it, a want of moral strength; for a Nurse who is willing and anxious to join the Association in secret, and yet is unwilling to face the consequences of her act, is obviously false to her colours, and most certainly not acting up to the motto, "Steadfast and True."

In these days of extreme difficulty in getting Hospital work, it is undoubtedly only too true that many Sisters and Nurses are not in a position

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