

and Miss Williams, the companion. Miss Williams had come to the Webster house as a girl, it being considered a splendid opening for her, the penniless daughter of a poor man. There was one who wanted her to share his humble lot, but in those days, Miss Williams looked down upon him. When she was past forty, and Miss Webster seventy-four, the old man dies, leaving his sister a fortune of millions.

In spite of the dreadful knowledge that it was much, much too late—half a century too late—the poor old soul tried to begin to enjoy her wealth.

“At each dinner she wore a different gown. It was at the third that she dazzled her guests with an immense pair of diamond earrings. At the fourth they whispered that she had been having her nails manicured. At the fifth it was painfully manifest that she had laced. At the sixth they stared and held their breath; Miss Webster was unmistakably painted. But it was at the tenth dinner that they were speechless and stupid; Miss Webster wore a blonde wig.”

The tragedy of the story is in the hate engendered between these two poor women—the one with money grudging the other her forty years' advantage, the one with not youth, but some life still before her; thirsting for the money which might open the door.

“I have existed forty-three years in this great, beautiful, multiform world,” cries the wretched companion, “and I might as well have died at birth for all that it has meant to me! I wish I had become a harlot!—a harlot, do you hear?”

Tragedy, indeed, lies hidden here; tragedy for which women's hearts will bleed. G. M. R.

### The New Russian Hymn.

The mute, un murmuring lips at last have spoken;  
The silence of black centuries have they broken  
With the wrung wail, the long-pent imploration:

“Help! lest we perish 'neath our tribulation!

“Help! lest we perish, soul and body riven!

We cry for bread, and but a stone are given;

For justice plead and only win the scourge!

Help! lest we sink, or in dread millions surge!

“'Tis little that we crave; the right to breathe

Free from the banes that round us ever seethe.

Help! lest the sun go down upon our sorrow,

To rise, blood-red, for thee and thine to-morrow!”

WILLIAM TOYNBEE, *Westminster Gazette.*

### Coming Events.

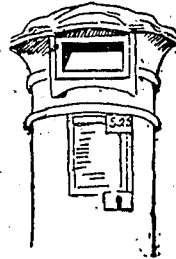
#### MEETING OF PROTEST.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND:—

A Meeting, convened by the Matrons' Council and the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, will be held at 20, Hanover Square, W., at 4 p.m., “To enter the strongest possible Protest against the License of the Board of Trade being granted to a Society which seeks to obtain absolute authority over Trained Nurses.”

The Lady Helen Munro Ferguson will preside.

Tickets by non-members of the above Societies may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W., or application may be made at the doors.



### Letters to the Editor. NOTES, QUERIES, &c.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

#### THE PERSONAL LIBERTY OF NURSES.

To the Editor of the “British Journal of Nursing.”

DEAR MADAM,—As a third year nurse at this institution, may I be allowed to criticise the statement made in your journal of the 4th inst., about the personal liberty of the nurses.

You mention two instances as examples:—

1. That “staff” nurses (we are not called staff, but “head” nurses here) are obliged to join the R.N.P. Fund; this is not correct; but if a fourth year nurse belongs to the Pension Fund, the hospital takes out a policy for £9 10s. for her, which is more than the one she must take out for herself, being £7 10.

2. Your remarks about the Nurses' League surprise me, as from your journal I have always gathered that you advocated them, and they cannot be carried on without regular subscriptions, which every candidate knows before entering the hospital she will have to pay, the amount being 5s. for the first year, 10s. the second, and 15s. the third, not £1 ls. as stated in your article.

This League gives us many things—a cottage at Honor Oak, where we can spend our week-ends, half days and three hours, with a tennis court, bicycles, &c. and a large library, debating and photographic societies, swimming club, &c.

In other ways the nurses here have much more liberty in every way than those in many other large London hospitals. I have spent five years in another one, and have friends in most of the others, so can speak from experience, and I may say that the liberty allowed the nurses here was a revelation to me when I first entered for training.

Yours faithfully,

A GUY'S HEAD NURSE,

Nurses' Home, Guy's Hospital, S.E.

[We welcome criticism, but prefer facts. In our editorial remarks of February 14th we stated, referring to the fact that the officials of Guy's Hospital were responsible for the now famous Nursing Ukase “that the personal liberty of the nurses in that institution leaves much to be desired,” and in support of our opinion we mentioned (1) the fact that it was compulsory for every staff nurse to subscribe to the Royal National Pension Fund. Our authority is *Burdett's Official Nursing Directory*, which says:—“As an encouragement to thrift, all nurses and probationers are advised to join the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, and, if after three years' training they are appointed on the staff it is compulsory that they should take out a policy for not less than £7 10s. per annum, the hospital also taking out a similar policy for £11 5s. per annum on their behalf, payable at fifty years of age.” If this arbitrary regulation has been rescinded we congratulate

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