

I am getting pessimistic again, and must remember that many excellent people have not enough imagination to realise what it is for a little child to work all night, or for young girls to follow their occupations from the cottage to the factory, or for women to think that they are occupying a divinely appointed sphere in filling one small home with luxury and shutting out from it the knowledge of those who live on the street.

There are some hopeful currents though. For one thing, our Federation of women's clubs, numbering over a million, and whose social status is in general that of our millionaire employers of labour, is now at last studying with a keen and painful intensity the problems of industrial slavery which for a long time it ignored or avoided. Thus, the upright and honest men (of whom there are still some specimens) are irresistibly turning from the ideal of private monopoly to consider the public ownership of public utilities. They are getting as painful lessons in civics as the women are in industrialism. Then science, the glorious and invincible, is showing the dullest mind the inseparable relation of disease to standards of living. The workers have long known that low wages, bad housing, long hours, and scant food meant tuberculosis, but their strikes for shorter hours and more pay have long been regarded as an insolent perversity. Now science stands forth triumphant to vindicate their claim. The general fear of consumption (may it never grow less) is likely to bring about what altruism has long struggled for in vain. Another immensely hopeful crusade is being launched in our midst—a crusade against the Black Plague of venereal disease. The movement is to take the form of frank, simple, clear teaching, and explanation of what venereal diseases are, how propagated, their results in physical disaster, and their relation to invalidism, degeneracy, and dependence.

Such plain and widespread teaching is, I feel convinced, the only possible hope for the mitigation of the most revolting of all degradations, prostitution. Again, what men will not do for preaching they will do from fear of outraged Nature's revenges of disease, if they are made to understand fully what they are, and just as the dread of phthisis is likely to be a lever to raise standards of living, so is the enlightenment on venereal disease likely to urge a rising standard of morals. But it is pathetic to see how silently and timorously the first teachings of the society formed for this purpose have been received. We are so moral and respectable, you know, and these things are not nice to talk about. So long as no one speaks of them it is just the same as if they did not exist. Then, to point out that this Black Plague is disseminated among the innocent wives and children in happy homes, just as the germs of tuberculosis and scarlet fever are stealthily distributed in those same homes in sweat shop products, is a rude shock to the conventional belief which newspaper writers (among themselves) call the "Sacred Cow" of accepted ideas.

The long silence of Medicine on this most melancholy subject has truly constituted a professional crime, which is now being repaired by the medical crusaders and teachers venturing on their hard and thorny road.

Do you see that nurses are just now undergoing a

withering course of criticism from certain members of the medical profession? There is really quite an epidemic of disapproval and criticism in the medical press, some of it, as concerns personal defects of nurses, quite true; but all of it as concerns principles and systems of education and of personal freedom quite wrong, much of it ill-natured, narrow-minded, and intolerant.

I really feel certain that it is all systematically emanating from one small and jealous source; I trace it to the opponents of organisation and of self-government who put their heads together in England not so very long ago—and how so? Because of a few catch words and stock phrases which were used by the original protestants. These little stock expressions reappear automatically in each fresh grumble, showing that there is a planned propaganda. I do not regard this as a medical unfriendliness pure and simple, but as a part of the general masculine jealousy and alarm over the progress of women: They are full of irritation at the thought of women standing beside men on an equal plane.

To oppose this unfriendliness by tart and resentful words is worse than useless. Only public education and reason can down it, and the most important resistance is in a firm and quiet holding of positions that are humanly just and right. I fear that if nurses "answer back" and display resentment or anger they will be simply playing into the hands of those who desire to control them, and who would like nothing better than to see a definite breach in the friendly relations that are general between nursing and medicine.

It does seem as if the time had come for the formulation of some new medical ethics as regards nursing. It cannot be anything but ethically wrong for medical men to encourage the mercenary principle of exploiting women who wish to become self-supporting by pretending to give an education which is really a sham. This is the plain truth of the grievance rising on the nursing horizon. Certain medical men in every State of the Union, are as ready to deceive and enslave the women who are able to make money for them in their privately owned hospitals as unscrupulous business men are ready to deceive and enslave their employees. There is absolutely not one atom or shred of difference in the situation. The best element of the medical profession, which has always repudiated commercialism, is in honour bound to attack and end this injustice, or else inevitably lose the respect of the nursing world. For respect and loyalty are not automatic. They must be deserved or they cannot be demanded.

It is quite true that nurses feel outraged at this unfair return for the loyalty that they have always heretofore shown, and sincerely felt, for their medical chiefs. It is all a part of the general degradation of our national ideas, by the blight of money-getting, and money-worshipping.

Our poor sisters in San Francisco are struggling along bravely, like everyone else. They are volunteering their services in hospitals, though themselves as destitute as the patients, and their latest effort is to establish a large convalescent camp for the numbers who cannot be retained in the acute hospitals.

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