

could offer homage in speech more felicitous, but there is no one present who can do so with greater sincerity than myself. After twenty years' intimate association with Miss Stewart in her public work—an intimacy productive of a warm and unbroken friendship—I may, perhaps, claim the right to speak to you of the career and personality of our dear colleague.

First, I would congratulate her that she was born at the psychological moment—that she came to womanhood in the strenuous seventies—a decade in which mysterious and irresistible forces touched, as with fire, the quiescent spirit of woman, when salutary economic pressure compelled her to test her faculties, to earn her bread, and to realise with delight that her intuitions, her power of self-control and endurance, her domestic arts, and her personal graces, were factors in the progress of civilisation, beside which brute force was as obsolete as the Dodo.

It was in the seventies that medical science first exclaimed "Be clean, be whole," and it was in response to the teaching of this fundamental principle of health that dainty maidens came forth, kit-brush and kettle in hand, entered our hospitals in great numbers, and with these homely weapons and some mother wit engaged in mortal combat the myriads of microbes whose utter route is now a matter of history.

Amongst these maidens was one Isla Stewart of Highland descent, reared in a godly environment, far away from this throbbing heart of the world, who in the year 1879 came to London to find her life's work and her fortune. She entered St. Thomas's Hospital as a Nightingale probationer, and blessed with a peculiarly generous and sympathetic temperament, and rare practical ability, she rose surely, step by step, up the ladder of nursing fame. After several years' work as Sister of the Alexandra ward at St. Thomas's Hospital, Miss Stewart proved her mettle by accepting one of the most difficult and distracting positions. In 1885, during a terrible epidemic of small-pox, she took charge of the Camp at Darenth, where, at one time, 1,000 stricken beings were segregated. Of its horrors and humours she alone can tell—that she did much to alleviate suffering, and bring order out of chaos proved her fine courage, and her ability as an administrator.

Appreciation of her work was not long delayed; in the year 1887 we find her selected to fill the most time honoured, as it is one of the most honourable posts in the nursing world, that of Matron and Superintendent of Nursing of the Royal Hospital of St. Bartho-

lomew, in the City of London, a successor to many nursing brothers and sisters of various communities, who for eight hundred years have from generation to generation followed after the great Founder, Rahere, of pious memory. How she has graced that lofty position, how far reaching has been her influence for good, what of respect and affection she has won, the majority of those here to-night know full well.

The thirty years in which Miss Stewart has been privileged to work as a nurse, have been the most arduous, as they have been the most important in the making of our beneficent profession. Never again will it fall to the lot of nurses in this country, to turn virgin soil, with infinite toil to excavate, lay sound foundations, and placing stone upon stone to carefully build up the edifice of Nursing. This has been the inspiration of our labour, and Isla Stewart has proved herself a Master Builder.

It remains for the State to add the coping stone, and for future generations of nurses to maintain rising standards of nursing.

Possessed of the admirable courage of the explorer, Miss Stewart has taken a leading part in every movement for the better organisation of Nurses, and of Nursing, during the past 20 years. Never has she waited to take part in a movement until the work of others has made it a success, but by giving personal support at the inception she has made successful every movement with which she is connected.

To few is it given to take the initiative, to work patiently and unceasingly for great and unpopular causes, to endure misrepresentation and disappointment with dignity, and to stand firm until such time as public opinion declares itself convinced, and is prepared to give its support.

All this and more Miss Stewart has done. To-night we will not strike one discordant note, but the fierce struggle for the professional enfranchisement of the trained nurse has not been made in kid gloves.

We can but take a cursory glance at Miss Stewart's strenuous activities, suffice it to say she was one of the half-dozen Matrons who accepted my invitation to found the British Nurses' Association in 1887, "to unite all qualified nurses in membership of a recognised profession," that she worked valiantly for its incorporation, never wavered in her allegiance to its principles when it fell away from its high ideals, that by its failure she was not discouraged, but at a critical moment she rallied the forces of progress, and organised the Matrons' Council to carry on the work, and in so doing she rendered signal service to the nurses

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