

pain and disease fly for asylum—and see this army of women, noiseless, vigilant, wise, and sympathetic, at duty, to understand how beautiful and brave is their task. The fretful child tossing in its cot, the strong man struck down by some fearful form of accident, the poor woman in her hour of trouble, the convalescent, and the dying, have but the same word of call on their lips: the word is ‘Nurse!’ and never is that summons for help pronounced in vain. Those thoroughly good and brave women, however, who now work as Nurses among us, many of them ladies of high degree, who have felt that Nursing was their calling, and obeyed the noble instinct, are comparatively a novelty, and only within this generation have they come forward to displace the careless, callous hirelings of days past, more inclined to look after their own creature comforts ‘when so disposed’ than attend to their patients. It is just because this new band of earnest women have put away into outer darkness, and wholly displaced, the dreadful old Gamps and Priggs of the past—whose characteristics were drink and ignorance—that the nation recognises so fully the inestimable character of their splendid services. Nurses are rightly the mostly popular class in the community; the people treat them with grateful and reverent respect; they can move unharmed and unscathed in the darkest and most sin-soiled places in the East End; the police will stop the whole traffic of a crowded street, or a procession to a Drawing Room, to allow the Sisters to cross the road, crying, as it were, ‘Make way for mercy!’ and they move among us with the privilege of queens. On the other hand, they are often badly paid; they have to keep late and laborious hours; and the constant danger of infectious sickness and of death is ever beside them, death as sudden as that on the battle-field. Moreover, they have hitherto been scattered abroad in various communities, orders, and sects, without much mutual knowledge of each other’s labours and work.

“It is to take this side of the question into action and practical view that the British Nurses’ Association, to which, with real pleasure, we call attention, has been founded. The Association is under the presidency of an illustrious ‘Sister,’ Her Royal Highness the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, and has been formed not only to help Nurses to assist each other in time of need and adversity, but also to augment, by united effort, their professional usefulness to the sick. At the present moment it is calculated that not fewer than fifteen thousand women are engaged as Nurses, and this number is constantly increasing by the addition of new recruits to the profession. It is evident that the members of so large an in-

dustry ought to secure for themselves the benefits which would accrue from the establishment of proper union and co-operation among them, and, moreover, every Nurse who is herself thoroughly qualified by professional training to undertake the conduct of a case has a direct personal interest in endeavouring to obtain for her sisters the possession of all necessary qualifications in the gentle science. There is certainly a comforting feeling about the first object of the Association, which is to bring about a state of things under which no one will be allowed to call herself a Nurse, or to be regarded by the public as one, unless she has undergone a proper course of Hospital training, and acquired an insight into the management of all kinds of illness, Medical and Surgical. The amateur Nurse, with the right instincts, but without scientific training, is often a dangerous person in a family. She may pin her faith to a sort of ‘tandem’ dose, consisting of a ‘leader’ of black currant jam and a ‘wheeler’ of ‘grey powder’—a compound which is not quite popular among adults who were brought up on this system—or she may attach undue importance to the efficacy of the fixed oil of the ‘*Ricinus communis*,’ when mingled with peppermint-water. She may, again, in her desire for an equable temperature, hermetically seal a sick room, or in her advocacy of fresh air open windows at the bottom; or she may be faithful to red flannel, or devoted to mustard plasters. It is obvious, however, that her little knowledge may be a dangerous thing, and the Association wisely exclude her from their body, and if she is also wise she will qualify for the Association. Then we learn that the now scattered body of Nurses are to be formed into a distinct profession, with the added strength and increased importance which such membership will confer; and that the Nurse will not be an isolated worker, but belong to a well-defined and important calling, the members of which are united together for all legitimate purposes of mutual protection and help. This also seems right and reasonable, and it is pleasant to find that the Council and Executive Committee are so constituted as to comprise representatives of every class contained in the Association—that is to say, Matrons, Sisters, Nurses, and Medical practitioners.

“Into the once vexed medical question as to whether women should be allowed to practise medicine or not it is not necessary to enter. Some women instinctively prefer seeking advice and help of a man in case of illness; others would rather tell their sorrows to their own sex. With regard to nursing, however, there is no room or place for doubt; it is a woman’s proud privilege to nurse; her peculiar power of ‘staying at home’ without any injury to her health,

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