

overcome. The courteous demeanour of the Celtic nation is indeed characteristic, and one which we Saxons might with great advantage emulate.

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WE have this week received the following letter bearing on this Conference, which we consider worthy of publication:—

“DEAR MADAM,—I have read with interest in last week’s ‘R.B.N.A.’ column, that a Conference of the Irish Members of the General Medical Council and the Association took place on Saturday, in London. How sincerely I hope that it may be the means whereby a more intelligent interest may be evinced in Ireland concerning Nursing affairs, and that our leading physicians and surgeons may be led to demand a much higher education and efficiency than exists at present all over the country. Since my long talk with you in the summer, I have quite come to your opinion, that in instituting reforms one must be absolutely impersonal, placing the principle before every consideration, and then become quite deaf to side issues. This has been the cause of your success in England through the Nursing controversy, and will, I do not doubt, in a few years, find you high and dry on the right side of legal status. ‘Justice,’ that has been your watchword, that the sick of all ranks should have efficient Nursing, and that the Profession of Nursing should be so arranged that this great result should be possible. What a fine ambition for the women of all nations! As an Irishwoman it grieves me terribly that we should be in the rear of progress, but you little know what terrible difficulties we have to encounter on all sides. First and foremost is the great and almost insurmountable financial difficulty, and the authorities of our Hospitals say it is impossible for them to grant a three years’ training to their Nurses with no hope of recompense. As things are now arranged, the Probationer binds herself for three years, at a low salary, and almost invariably repays the Hospital for one year’s board and lodging by working as a Private Nurse for one or two years—thus, as you express it, being “hired out” for the benefit of the school. This must be wrong, because, by this system, both patient and Nurse suffer—the former, from the Nurse’s ignorance; the latter from the wholesale demoralization which results from the acceptance of a low standard as the highest good. Then we have ever with us the religious question, and the Irish question resolves itself into the test of who shall be supreme in Ireland—our gracious Queen or His Holiness the Pope—and although Nursing, of all occupations, should be unsectarian, there is intense jealousy and bitterness between sects in the Irish Hospital world. Many Irish Hospitals are still nursed by Roman Catholic Nuns, who have no scientific training, and whose religious duties clash with such material occupations as ward work. Spiritual observances *must* be obeyed, and in consequence the sick bodies must wait. There are also national characteristics to be taken into consideration. To you grim Saxons, we Celts are a volatile nation, and Nursing is often a grim, monotonous daily grind, very laborious, and very antipathetic to our versatile and imaginative nature. To do the same thing every day, at the same minute, in the same way, is almost an impossibility to us. What we do by *instinct* we do well; what we do by rule we do badly, and the very sound of “uniformity” inspires us with aversion. Mrs. Strong, in her Paper on the “Uniformity of Education for Nurses,” has, I fear, sounded the note to which, as a nation, we shall most readily respond, in the significant remark—brutal in frankness and yet true—“As clearly as I can understand the aim of those interested in the matter (Nursing reform), it is their desire to stand aloof from all sections of parties, taking a broad general survey of the question, offering to Nurses their help and suggestions, and if Nurses themselves are not desirous of gaining a definite status, to coerce them into the gaining of it, for the protection

*of their employers.*” I may be wrong; we must wait and see what results from the important Conference of last week.”

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We cannot express an opinion of any value on this new phase of the “Irish Question,” because we have no personal experience of the subject, but we are quite sure that if the wish for reform and organisation does not spring from an awakened conscience on the part of Irish Nurses themselves, the time is not yet ripe for the formation of an Irish Branch; for it will be well within the memory of our readers that English Nurses themselves inspired the great movement now incorporated by Royal Charter; and, so long as singleness of purpose animates their endeavour for reform, they will slowly, yet surely, succeed and attain the goal of their laudable ambition. All true purification must spring from within. Therefore, Irish Sisters, take counsel together and do not wait for the inevitable coercion which Registration by Act of Parliament will bring in the near future.

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MOST of our readers know “LEO,” the great canine philanthropist, whose blameless life is spent in the service of the Hospital for Women and Children, at Cork. Of course “LEO,” like the spirited fellow he is, entered a doll for competition in aid of the R.B.N.A. Bazaar, and we are glad to observe that residence in an Institution has apparently sharpened his powers of observation, and by no means deprived him of his sense of humour. A more life-like and original specimen of a doctor to out-patients we have seldom seen, and we hope our readers will encourage this versatile doggie by helping to relieve him of some of his financial responsibility. We print below his characteristic letter.

“The Editor of ‘The Nursing Record.’

BOW-WOW-WOW-WOW!

MRS. EDITOR,—Bow-wow-wow! I’m sending you an Irish doctor, a man of great skill, who, like Chaucer’s ‘parfitte practisour,’ knows ‘. . . the cause of every maladie.’

Living in a Hospital, as I do, I have much opportunity of observing the Faculty, and in order to show my respect and appreciation of our medical attendants, I am sending you the model of one of them in his professional attire. To this latter point I have paid much attention, the importance of clothes having been long ago pointed out to me by our friend Teufelsdröckh. (You perceive that I am a dog of parts!)

I may observe that masculine attire is always much more difficult to make than the pretty flimsy garments that ladies wear. But as I have a natural love of surmounting difficulties I have been true to myself in attempting to copy the simple and elegant costume of our modern physicians, rather than a ball-dress, or a peasant costume, or even the furry coat of a pussy-cat, and I hope you will give me credit accordingly.

Last year I sent an appeal to THE NURSING RECORD. This year I have more efforts to tell you of. So with head erect, and tail wagging in trustful expectation of a kind reception, I come to tell you of my birthday concert. Here is the programme of it which will tell you the names of my artistes. We were very successful, for though it was only a drawing-room concert we realized over £100 for our Hospital, so that it was one of the proudest days of my life. Our Nurses subscribed to give me a whole chicken for my birthday

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