

Writing of Nursing as a Profession Miss Balgarnie says:—

"That the art is passing from the purely philanthropic to the professional stage is a fact no one can fail to recognise. Certain pioneers are inclined to deprecate this, and to sound a note of warning against the danger of making Nursing rather a profession than a 'calling,' merely, indeed, another means to money earning.

But women of leisure and wealth are too apt to forget that the absence of need for money earning is a sure and certain sign that the person so situated is living on the toil of someone else—capital, land, dividend; a settled income which enables the possessor of them to live independent of money earning, means that someone else is labouring to produce dividends, by reason of which their recipient need neither toil nor spin. Every woman lives either by her own exertions or by those of a second person; she is either a worker, or, in the strict meaning of the term, a pauper on the bounty of some one else. To deprecate, then, Nursing as a paid profession indicates a lack of appreciation of the true basis of society.

A woman does well and wisely to make Nursing a profession, just as a man or woman does to make medicine or surgery or pharmacy. All professions, whether practised by men or by women, may be either noble or ignoble. They are noble precisely in the degree that self is eliminated and the needs of suffering humanity become the keynote of action. The young woman to-day who voluntarily goes forth into the world, relieving an anxious father of some of the strain of providing for his large family, and who after years of laborious training makes the art of Nursing her profession, makes a better start than the daughter of rich parents who enters the field through sheer *ennui* of the aimless life she has too long been leading. Both types of women may prove a success or a failure. Success will be won by both if the ideal towards which they are ever striving is helpfulness towards the sick and the erring.

This *esprit de corps* is fostered in a thousand ways. The Common Homes attached to Hospitals or for private Nurses, where they may spend their leisure days, are everywhere proving a boon. New enthusiasm, more knowledge, fresh technical skill are in this way made possible. There is a tendency, more especially within the last few years, for Nurses to dissociate themselves from the Hospitals where they have been trained, and to form their own private *clientèle* of patients. This is what pioneers more especially deprecate, but it has undoubtedly been forced upon Nurses by the rigorous Hospital *régime* which hires out skilled women at very high charges, of which a mere fraction finds its way into the pocket of the earner."

Of the Royal British Nurses' Association, it is the opinion of Miss Balgarnie that:—

"Such an Association develops the spirit of comradeship, self-respect, affords opportunities for self-improvement, and helps to protect Nurses against a system which, by depriving them of the earnings of their youth, may leave them stranded in hopeless poverty as old age approaches."

We are glad to observe such admirable teaching in the lay press—it is bound to bear good fruit.

At the recent grand demonstration and outdoor fête held at Hebden Bridge in aid of the Todmorden Nursing Institute, the Chairman, Mr. D. J. Crossley, in addressing the meeting said the Nursing Institute had not been formed very long—he thought scarcely twelve months, perhaps six or seven at most—but during that time he had been informed that those who had received benefit from the visits of the Nurse were very thankful, and hailed her visitations with pleasure and thankfulness. Nurse Rose, as the Nurse was called, had been there some five months; she came amongst them a complete stranger and did not know the people. It took her some time to get into ship shape, or, as was locally expressed, to "get her loom properly geared." But though she had only been there a short time she had had 74 cases and paid 1,413 visits. That showed that the Nurse had not been idle considering her short residence amongst them; she had paid on an average eight or ten visits a day to the sick. She had visited the sick poor in their homes, and also those who, though they might not be able to support from their own funds a Nurse of their own, were able to obtain the services of the Nurse by contributing something towards the expenses. Their institute was affiliated with the Queen Victoria Nursing Institute, and of course their Nurse was fully trained and efficient for the work for which she was engaged. The Nurse did not take the place of the doctors, she merely helped to carry out the instructions of the doctors. She was also very useful in giving hints and information to those who were attending and Nursing in the houses of the sick. There was one very important feature connected with the Institution which to his mind was very attractive, and that was the unsectarian basis on which it was worked. A week ago, as they had already heard, he and they were engaged in a political contest, and they held different views upon the questions then before them; they felt then that they had a duty and a right to give expression to their opinions according as the facts appeared to their consciences, but that day they were met on a broad and unsectarian platform, and they could join hands heartily together and work together in a cause so good and benevolent as that Institution. They were met together to carry out the commands and teachings of the great teacher and benefactor of their common Christianity when he asked the question "Who is my neighbour?" and they sought to do so by helping their sick neighbour on the lines of that Institution.

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