

which Private Nurses work for, and should be engaged by, the public, and the remuneration which they receive, with special reference to the important points not only of their present livelihood, but also of their ability to make some pecuniary provision for sickness and old age.

It is a fact which cannot be too strongly impressed upon the public, that a Trained Nurse who devotes three years to acquiring an adequate knowledge of her professional work, demands, and should receive, a fair remuneration for her services, and that this fact really lies at the root of the whole subject. If a Private Nurse cannot obtain such payment, it is inevitable that she should object to the long, arduous, and costly apprenticeship which she is expected to serve. On the other hand, it is equally beyond all dispute that the public, if they pay the ordinary fees for their Private Nurses, have the most distinct right to demand that those services shall be efficient and trustworthy; or, in other words, that their Nurse shall have been properly trained for the responsible duties she is called upon to perform.

That "the labourer is worthy of his hire," is a truth as binding to-day as it was when it was first uttered with all the immense authority that was given to the proverb by its Author; but this was, until recent years, ignored in the case of Private Nurses. The old system was radically wrong, because it placed a middleman, between the public and the Nurse, whose natural desire it was to make as great a profit from the labour of his employées as he could possibly extract from the pockets of the public, while at the same time he was in a great measure irresponsible for the efficiency of the workers whom he farmed out. The consequence was plainly seen when the Registration of Nurses was first proposed. All those who desired to be able to make profits out of the work of Nurses, without regard to the benefit and safety of the sick; who were in the habit therefore, of employing, on their staff, women whose characters would not always bear investigation, and whose technical training, was, as a rule, equally open to question, were naturally incensed beyond measure at the idea of the public being provided with information such as could be obtained from a Register of Trained Nurses—that is to say, the knowledge whether or not a given Nurse had been properly educated for her duties, and precisely when and where she had obtained

that education. It might, therefore, have been expected that Nurse-farms conducted on such principles, would strenuously oppose and resist the advent of Registration. But, happily for the public, that battle has been fought and won, and it will ever be a source of gratification to the present and future Editors of this journal that, single-handed in the Press, it carried on the Registration crusade, from its very commencement, to its successful issue. The Registration of Nurses led, inevitably, to the institution of Co-operations amongst Nurses; the guarantee to the public that a Nurse was thoroughly trained, led by a natural process of evolution to the Nurse being freed from her previous task-masters, and being enabled, for the first time, to ask for, and to receive, the full reward of her work.

The success of the various Co-operations which have followed the establishment of the Royal British Nurses' Association, has therefore been received with the greatest pleasure by every well-wisher of the Nursing profession and by everyone who has any respect for the comfort and safety of the sick.

Eight years ago, there were thousands of Nurses who asked what the British Nurses' Association would do for them. They are now receiving their answer. It has not only converted their calling into a profession recognised by the State, but it has been the means of bringing about Unions for various objects, the formation of which has necessarily been to their great individual advantage; and it is only a question of time now when the seed which has been sown will come to full fruition, and when the Registration of Nurses will be rendered more or less compulsory by Act of Parliament. The practical result of all this should appeal chiefly to Private Nurses, because it is by means of such Co-operation that they are now enabled to earn from £100 to £150 per annum, whereas formerly they deemed themselves fortunate if they were paid, by the managers of the Institutions with which they were connected, a salary equal to a third of that amount.

We believe that Nurses are learning the lesson that Union is Strength, and that they will co-operate to carry out other important professional objects.

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