

and he hoped there would never be a suspicion of its failing—the Empire would not be worth five minutes purchase. He then proceeded:—

“What is the State? The State is, after all, only the aggregate of the individuals who compose it. The State is only the nation, and the nation are the men and women who inhabit the country. If you weaken their character, if you impair their self-reliance, if you strike at their independence, your State, by whatever name you call it, will have vanished like an empty dream. Therefore, I welcome the fact that the miners of this district are going to show an honorable independence and an honorable self-reliance by rating themselves to maintain this hospital.”

We must, however, take exception to some of these remarks, for women, at present, to the national disgrace, and the great loss of the community in general, play no part in the formation of the State. They are allowed to exist it is true, and to contribute to the comfort of the other sex, but their portion is existence, merely, they are no more required to take their share in affairs which concern the welfare of the State than are the criminals or animals also permitted to live in this country. That the State suffers by reason of its injustice to women is certain, women could contribute much, were they permitted, which would be of great value to it. And the women suffer also. Their character is weakened, their self-reliance impaired, their independence assailed. The women of the present day for instance are compelled to take lower pay for performing the same work as men. Why? Because men so decree it, and they have no voice, no vote wherewith to enforce their claims to justice. In the bitter struggle for existence they deteriorate morally. Why? Because being placed in the position of slaves they develop the typical attributes of the race, and they fawn on the bully who beats them, if haply they may prevent the rod falling again. To go no further for a definite illustration than the nursing profession. How often does one hear it stated quite frankly by nurses that they must wink at wrong doing, because, if they expose it, they will gain the reputation of being contentious, and lose their appointments, and they cannot afford to “quarrel with their bread and butter?” Peace, they say, with honour, if possible, but if not, still peace, peace at any price. Woman after woman, who starts on her career with high ideals, succumbs to the plea of expediency. If

they are not willing to retain the posts they hold on the terms insisted upon, there are plenty of others who are, and they “bow to the inevitable.” They place in the balance on one side their bread and butter, the good opinion of others, their professional advancement, and, on the other, their duty, and with it the loss of all that makes life worth living to them—namely, a place in the profession they love more than all the world besides, and by the exercise of that profession a means of support for themselves, and, may be, those dependent on them. It is a bitter alternative, and one which should never be placed before them. Can we wonder if the scale goes down on the wrong side? The blame—though the women are not free from blame—rests mainly with those who deny them the right to take their proper place in the State, and then taunt them with the lack of self-reliance and independence engendered by their position.

Annotations.

THE BALANCE OF POWER IN HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION.

WE notice in the *St. Bartholomew's Hospital Journal* a criticism of the discussion which took place at the Matrons' Council Conference on the much vexed question of the Balance of Power in Hospital Administration. This is good, firstly because it tacitly implies the recognition of the existence of the aforesaid “balance” on the part of our medical contemporary, and secondly because all ventilation of the question is useful. We can conceive that a conference of representatives of the three departments concerned in the balance, namely the medical, nursing, and secretarial departments, might have a very useful effect. Many of the difficulties which at present arise do so, we believe, from lack of knowledge, and from misunderstanding, rather than from deliberate ill will, and if a code of ethics could be determined by a conference representative of all the interests involved, we are hopeful that good results would follow.

Our contemporary takes exception to the position accorded to Miss Palmer, of the City Hospital, Rochester, U.S.A., by the trustees of that institution, as explained by her at the Matrons' Council Conference. We are willing to concede the recommendation of physicians for resident appointments, which forms a part of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)