

attains the serenity and dignity commonly associated with adult life.

The young profession of nursing is at present going through the stage when its growing pains are making themselves most uncomfortably felt, and its position in the eyes of the public, and in those of its members who most keenly desire its welfare, is not altogether a pleasing one. It is, in fact, passing through a most critical period of its career, and needs, at the present time, all the help and guidance which those of its members qualified by experience and ability can give it.

Why is it that many of the best Matrons hold back from coming to the front at the present crisis, and while doing most admirable and valuable work in the institutions to which they belong yet leave the organization of the profession at large to those whose position does not warrant their assuming such responsibility, and who are not likely to carry out this most important and honourable duty on the wisest and most liberal lines? There is no doubt that many Matrons whose co-operation and support would be invaluable to their colleagues hold aloof because they not unnaturally fear to be involved in the unseemly strife which the conduct of a medical faction in the Royal British Nurses Association has aroused, and which has made it a bye word to all observers. But we must also think that these Matrons refrain from touching nursing politics because they do not so far recognise the significance of the issues involved. Did they do so they must surely feel that their place is at the helm, and that the duty of organising the profession to which they belong is theirs by reason of their position, and is one which they cannot ignore. The longer they stand aside, the longer will the friction continue, and the Nurses' Association, founded for the professional benefit of nurses, will act as a barrier to all professional progress. Those who inaugurated this Association some thirteen years ago, but who certainly did not fully appreciate at that time the economic questions involved in its organization, are not discouraged at the momentary success of reactionary tactics. They know that the forces of nature are on their side, and that the victory must ultimately be theirs, but none the less do they appeal to all Matrons to unite to organize their profession on professional lines, and not to leave it in the hands of some of the less influential members of the medical profession, who care more for the notoriety they obtain as the satellites of a

Royal Princess than for the well-being of nurses and nursing.

We have constantly affirmed that nurses, subordinate as they must ever be *in the sick room* to the the direction of medical men, must outside it be free to organize their own profession on a self-supporting basis. In this the American superintendents have undoubtedly shown themselves our superiors. In practical nursing we believe that no country excels, even if it equals, our own, but with regard to organization American matrons have grasped the duty which lies to their hand, as we in this country have so far not done. They have their rocks ahead, it is true, but they will tackle them courageously. They will not leave the broad road of duty for bye-paths which they hope will lead more pleasantly to the same end, but which are labyrinths in which their steps must with much difficulty be retraced till their feet are set on the hard road once more. The direct methods, and the professional co-operation, of American superintendents must always command respect. When a larger number of British hospital matrons take publicly the same position at the head of their profession its well being will be assured, on a basis equally satisfactory to patients, doctors, and nurses.

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### Annotations.

#### THE SOCIETY NURSE FRAUD.

WE observe that already the society women's papers are throwing out feelers as to the ultimate honours to be awarded to society women for their "devotion to the sick and wounded." In this age of frauds we have little doubt that social pressure will be brought to bear upon the "fount of all honour," and that we shall in the near future find the Nurses' Badge bestowed upon women who have advertised their "devotion" by a trip to South Africa, in the wake of the baggage wagon, and have there been photographed in our professional uniform as nurses of sick soldiers. Cape Town gaities and the wearing of Parisian confections and "Kimberley glitters," have, however, fortunately for "Tommie," monopolised most of their time; but no doubt the Royal Red Cross will make an effective addition to the toilet in the coming by and bye. It already reclines on the august bosoms of various women who have never done a week's consecutive nursing in their lives; and it is deeply to be regretted that some other distinction has not been

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