

if it became public—as through this journal it happily has done—it would rouse a furor of opposition. Certain it is from the crudeness and crampedness of mind permeating this extraordinary document it could only have been drafted by men who have been placed in a position of absolute personal power over many women, power which it is as dangerous as it is undesirable to place in the hands of any man.

To show that the women who are organising the opposition to the incorporation of this autocratic Society are in no wise afraid of pleading their own cause, invitations to attend the meeting at 20, Hanover Square have been sent to the seven signatories to the Memorandum. We hope that they will find time to attend it, to hear what nurses have to say.

Annotations.

LUXURY v. POVERTY.

Those who have lived amongst the poor, and have thus a practical acquaintance with the causes which lead to poverty, can furnish valuable information on this subject which is at present a source of national anxiety, and a letter addressed to the press by past and present heads of Settlements in poor districts deserves the attention of thoughtful persons. The signatories include the Rev. and Hon. James Adderley, formerly Head of Oxford House, Bethnal Green; the Rev. S. A. Barnett, of Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel; Miss R. H. Cheetham, of the Women's Settlement, Canning Town; Miss Beatrice C. Harrington, of St. Margaret's House, Bethnal Green; and other prominent social workers. They call the attention of their fellow-citizens to the extreme of luxury which exists alongside of the extreme of poverty, and express the belief that luxury, which leads people to much expenditure on private enjoyment, amusement, or display, without making them more useful to the community, is an actual cause of poverty. It diverts wealth from the uses which give the most profitable employment to labour, and tends to prevent improvements being made in the conditions under which the majority of the people live. The arguments advanced are:—(1) That the example of luxury permeating the whole body of Society seems to set up "having" rather than "being" as the chief object of life, and that under its influence the individual's powers of admiration, hope, and love are neglected.

Education comes to be regarded as a means of livelihood only, not of life, and charity tends to treat men and women as animals with no wants beyond food and shelter. But these neglected powers of "being" are those by which men live. They are the roots of the resourcefulness, the intelligence, the daring, and the sympathy which increase wealth.

(2) Luxury induces the selfishness which makes us as a nation indifferent to the ugliness of our towns. When private possession of wealth is regarded as necessary to happiness, the sky is defiled with smoke, grass and trees are destroyed, and slum quarters are permitted, in order that successful people may surround themselves with the comforts and beauty which art and skill provide, but the mass of people who have to do their work amid depressing ugliness and dirt miss the recreation which their wearied minds and bodies might find in an environment of natural beauty.

(3) It leads to cruelty in our industrial relations. When among rich and poor no good seems comparable to the good which money can procure, profits are put before health, gambling before work, and force before right; child labour is used, conditions of trade and housing which cripple strength are permitted, and wars, industrial as well as foreign, are justified; landlords take their rent, and holders of shares in companies take their dividends and forget the earners' sufferings. Human beings injured and weakened are thrown on the scrap-heap, they become unemployed and unemployable, and poverty follows.

The signatories plead for examples of simple living to counteract the example of luxury which appears to them anti-social. For the example of full lives spent in refined homes, lives which find their interest in clear thinking and deep feeling, so that the people may realise that the greatest happiness is within their reach if they will seek "to be" rather than "to have." The example of a simpler life would, in their opinion, more effectively than legislation, or than great money gifts, contribute to national stability.

A WINDFALL FOR CHARITIES.

Under the will of Mr. James Holmes Lucking, of Streatham Hill, no less than £100,000 has been bequeathed to charities, a large number of the London Hospitals being amongst the recipients. The destitute and distressed children of London also come in for a share of this good fortune.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)