

subject by Dr. Sheen. The lecture, from beginning to end, seems to me to be full of sound advice to those who would follow the honourable profession of a Nurse; but no part of it do I, as the head of a household, appreciate more than these excellent words, which the lecturer quotes from Miss Nightingale: "A Nurse should be an example of neatness, order, cleanliness, and sobriety. She should also be very careful to discourage tale-bearing, scandal, or unprofitable conversation."

These are the words of "a lady" in the best sense of the word—a gentlewoman, who knows woman's weakness in this respect and its evil consequences. The days of Sairey Gamp are happily at an end, but too often even now do we hear that the Nurse upsets the whole household. Certain it is that the Nurse, and especially the lady Nurse, who is treated as one of the family, wields a powerful influence for good or for evil, and especially in families where divisions unhappily exist. In these cases her proper course is, perhaps, to attend strictly to her duties, and say as little as possible; for those who meddle with other people's business are generally found to muddle their own. Anyhow, if she is appealed to, let her influence be on the side of peace and good-will. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Surely no one would wish for an opposite fate.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
PATERFAMILIAS.

DISTRICT NURSING; OR, THAT STRANGE DEVICE "EXCELSIOR"!

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—Kindly permit me to briefly supplement the letter on "Cottages for Solitary District Nurses," which appeared in your issue of February 27 last.

Being intensely interested in the improvement of the condition of the suffering and shivering poor, and the elevation of District Nursing—especially in our *solitary* districts—may I take the opportunity of handing you the two cuttings below from a recent copy of *The Christian*, and from which you might glean for yourself somewhat of the many "glowing" needs and privations still current amongst this particular class of society. But let me stop to illustrate this point a little.

Scarcely twelve months ago I took a solitary district "on trial" for thirty-one days—population about seventy-five thousand—and registered not less than twenty-one deaths in the meantime. Of course I was not a statuette only; so I noticed that, in my humble opinion, fifteen out of the twenty-one were deaths hastened by poverty. I can only add that I failed entirely to find both interested helpers and funds combined equal to opening out this vast field, whereat I could only retire, wishing it were otherwise. Here there were then only *one* District Nurse, no Nurses' Home, and no "connecting link" attached to our would-be noble profession of Nursing that I knew of. But kindly notice the contents of the two cuttings aforesaid:—

"At a recent inquest upon the body of an East End dock labourer who had died of consumption, it was testified that although the man had been unable to work for a long time, except very occasionally, the wife could get no assistance from the parish. The Board of Guardians had refused to let the poor fellow have out-door relief, and he was unwilling to leave his wife and the children. She, therefore, maintained him and the family as well as she could. The Doctor stated that the man required careful Nursing and nourishing food, which was impossible for the woman to procure; a verdict was returned 'accordingly.' In a second case in the same district, on the same day, the victim was the poor widow of a dock labourer, who had two shillings and sixpence per week from the parish, 'and an occasional sixpence from a friendly neighbour when the latter could spare it.' Out of this amount one shilling per week went for rent; the house in which she lived being, like all the houses in the court, very unsanitary. The Coroner said that in each of the four inquests he had held during the day poverty had hastened death. He expressed a wish that

such inquests could be held in the West End, that it might be seen how the poor live."

"It seems, however, that a juror, who commented severely upon the present system of out-door relief, was nearer the mark; for, under the present arrangements, there does not appear to be room for the exercise of either common sense or common charity. The sooner we come to recognise the dread which the honest and deserving poor have of 'the Union,' the better, and if we legislate in favour of a system of public charity which shall be more in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel, we shall not only do much to commend Christianity to the suffering poor, but we shall also best serve the interests of the ratepayer."

Again, are we quite sure that as a profession we are doing all that we might be doing in this direction? Must we leave this responsible and aggressive work for some other agency to tackle? Surely not!

Personally, I feel most strongly on this point. And I cannot help thinking that more "thank-offerings," and the introduction of District Nursing cottages, might become powerful auxiliaries to our best talents, by the way of securing a greater division of labour, and affording more time for the *thinking and working out* of this apparently knotty problem. And I should like here to insert cutting number three, in the hope that others might be led to "go and do likewise":

"The announcement that Lady Howard de Walden has notified her intention of endowing, at a cost of £12,000, a wing of the West Kent Hospital, at Maidstone, as a thank-offering for her recent recovery from an illness, is, unfortunately, noteworthy by reason of the infrequency with which gratitude for God's mercies in sickness takes so generous a form. We would wish to see the example followed, and we trust that it may be."

Finally, hitherto I have given up much in my devotion to this idea, and I wonder if those of your readers who are in a position to do so would kindly assist me as time rolls on to work it out more perfectly, for very possibly there is in it the germ of a great Medical Nurse Missionary enterprise, fruitful in the happiest results.

Enclosing you cutting No. 4, I would again subscribe myself, yours to serve,
THEODORA.

"At the recent Glamorganshire Assizes a labourer, who was indicted for housebreaking, was treated by the Judge with great leniency, and sentenced to only two days' imprisonment, upon the earnest appeal of his brother, who urged that he was 'the only member of a decent family who had gone wrong.' Influenced, possibly, by the example of the judge, a gentleman stepped forward and offered the repentant man employment, which was gratefully accepted. A little brotherly help is worth much more in the way of reformation than any amount of imprisonment, and it would be well for society, and also for the criminal, if this gentleman's example were more frequently imitated."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—I have just read with pleasure the report of the Adelaide Hospital, which has been printed in the *Nursing Record* of April 3, 1890. The committee might well feel proud of having two such worthy persons as the Lady Superintendent (Miss Poole) and the Matron (Miss Knight). I have known the Matron for many years, and I think that there has been no one more deserving of the highest rank and praise that could be obtained from any Hospital than Miss Gertrude Knight. I must congratulate the committee on the success of the Adelaide Hospital, which indeed has been due to the unflinching energy of Miss Poole and Miss Knight; and, indeed, I think the committee might well express their satisfaction at the way the Hospital has been managed. Hoping to see this letter printed in your next paper.—I remain, yours truly,
C. H.

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