

when they have any, then the mob attacks him with slander; but if he regards truth, let him expect martyrdom on both sides, and then he may go on fearless."

Somewhat about three years ago a most distressing case of want came under my notice. It was that of an intelligent working-man, with a wife and family of seven children. He had been out of work nearly three years when I saw him, and his wife and family were on the verge of starvation. Blest with a philosophic turn of mind, I resolved to plumb to the bottom of this problem, as this was not by any means the only similar case on view. The poor fellow had, somehow or other, given offence to his late master—a clergyman, forsooth; and so this "godly" man had been pleased to consider it his duty to stigmatise this poor man's character away every time he had been referred to. Of what earthly use are such "goody-goody" referees? No body of men who can deliberately throw men less favourably circumstanced than themselves out of employment, and then cruelly keep them out, should be either referred to or patronised. Indeed, Sir, I have seen so much silent suffering, caused from this disagreeable religious tyranny, that I hail with joy the knowledge that at length the fierce light of public opinion has penetrated these quarters. After the matter had been investigated this man got into work again, and proved himself one of our most clever and trusty artisans.

And this self-same spirit of "dogmatism" in religious matters has had a long reign in the Nursing profession. But then "the clergy, claiming for their order to be divine, though as frail in their individual aspect as common mortals, as ambitious, as worldly, as licentious, as unprincipled, as wicked in fact as other men; by claiming to be superior by their order to law have made it difficult at all times for the law to be brought to bear upon them." Thus understood, it will not be difficult to evolve the "why" and "wherefore" of those unreliable testimonials which turn up so frequently now-a-days, thereby forcing many of our best women out of the ranks. We need not go further than our professional advertisement columns to gather the *sine qua non* for successful candidature. Despite this, no words can be too strong in condemnation of these modes of procedure. When will the Nursing world shake off, once and for ever, all such accursed fetters? All monopolies, pet schemes and cherished opinions should be gladly laid upon the no mean altar of the common-weal.

Listen! All unawares a case of obstruction is sent to yonder solitary District Nurse, just as she is leaving her home for church. Must she attend to it, or go to church? She prefers the former course. The case assumes a serious form, and the Nurse returns to her quarters to repair her instruments. A curious neighbour, perchance, overlooks her, tells the clergyman "the Nurse" works on Sundays, and presently she finds herself covertly pitchforked out of her appointment for not going to church on Sundays as other people do. May I ask you, Sir, which of the twain were the more Christian, the Nurse, or the reverend gentleman? "That good man, the clergyman, may starve me as much as he likes," says the Nurse, "but he will never starve me out of my principles. I prefer rather to lead the life of the martyr." Brave Spartan little Nurse! "Please all men with the truth; woud not the truth to please any man."

We come then to the pertinent question as to who we are to be ruled by—fairly looked at—free from prejudice and bias. We must no longer allow ourselves to be carried away by the colour of men's garments. Personally, I hereby certify before God and man that I never did any good work as a Nurse until I lightened my ship of "the creeds." As Carlyle observes, "we must look straight through the clothes at the real man within." For, be it remembered, to our own Master we stand; not at the bar, as Paul declared, of any human judgment. "Men must go to church or chapel from conviction, not because 'it is safer so to do'; and men must cease to threaten evil consequences in this world or the next

to those who cannot think as they do." The men who buy livings are not the men to reform the world. Such men have missed their vocation in life.

"If the Church was worthy of the proud position she assumes," says another writer; "if its teaching was of the inestimable value the clergy attach to and credit it with, would not the result be manifest in its power to make man rise superior to the manifold sins and weaknesses we find him as guilty of now as before the advent of Christianity?" And if we must have a "code of religion," it must be a far more cosmopolitan code than the creeds of to-day can supply; that is, if we are to rise equal to the world's need. The clergy should cultivate genuine humanity rather than ceremony, and not give cause for such strong condemnation as that which the American poet Lowell puts into the lips of the Saviour of men—

"With gates of silver and bars of gold
Ye have fenced My sheep from their Father's fold:
I have heard the droppings of their tears
In heaven these eighteen hundred years."

"The Church is dying of respectability," said one of her bravest sons the other day; "she is too respectable to live." And pending the somewhat "ensnaring" religious census—now in meditation for 1891—I would earnestly sound the bugle-call to our entire profession. We want, above all else, religious emancipation—freedom to march on to greater successes in the future.—Faithfully yours,

AN UNSECTARIAN EYE-WITNESS.

A QUERY.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—Can you inform me of any Home or Institution where a weak-minded boy could be placed? The ordinary "Institutions" appear to be too expensive, as the father earns but eighteen shillings per week, and could therefore only pay a very small amount.—Yours truly,
L. E. M. S.
[We have sent the addresses of several "Institutions" to "L. E. M. S.," but we regret to find that the terms asked are too high. Perhaps some of our readers can give the required information.—Ed.]

QUERIES RESPECTING REGISTRATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Dear Sir,—I should be much obliged by your kindly letting me know something of the aims and method of the Nurse Registration movement, of which I have only lately heard, as I have for some time been engaged in Home Nursing and rather out of touch with the Nursing world.

For instance, do you Register Mental Nurses? I ask this being interested in a small Home for Nurses engaged entirely on nervous and mental cases. Also, is it the truth that you exclude all who have not served three years in the same Hospital? That would prevent my joining, and yet I have been Nursing for more than ten years, but home duties and my own illness (in Hospital) have quite prevented the fulfilment of such a condition. I know of other far cleverer Nurses who would also be in the same position regarding such a rule.

Pray forgive my thus troubling you, but love of my profession must plead my excuse, and, as I often take holiday charge for my friends, wish to know the truth of what—from what I can gather—seems a vexed question.—Yours faithfully,
J. M. G.

[We should advise our correspondent to write direct to the British Nurses' Association, 9, Oxford Circus Avenue, Oxford Circus, W., and strongly recommend that very excellent Association to take up and consider well the advisability of admitting Probationers and those not fully trained as Provisional Members, or Associates, until such time as their training is completed, when they can then become members.—Ed.]

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