

perhaps insuperable, obstacles in the way. For Protestantism to achieve that great result there are not. In the one case there is a bitter, a mortal animosity to be overcome; in the other, a friendship that misunderstandings have alienated to be restored."

Next on our list are those "demure" Matrons and Committees—and appallingly narrow-brained and puny-minded mortals, for "professional" people, some of these have shown themselves to be—those modest people, whom good observers have characterised as having been gifted with an elastic and accommodating comprehensiveness, keen arbitrariness and cupidity, who have been (and are) so excessively careful to draw the line of demarcation, to leave no freedom for thought, no scope for the free play of inventive knowledge, and to place our District Nurses in "holy" habitations, you know. For no philosophical eye could fail to seize on the truth concerning this matter, to penetrate those demoralising subterfuges—viz., that *greed of self-aggrandisement*, and "glorified cannibalism"—Might masquerading in the guise of Right—have much to give an account of here also. The resulting position of all this prudery is something like this. Many of those District Nurses find themselves carefully hedged in on every side, as though they were insane, by those so-called good Christians, whose mission is, they say, to "convert" and "subdue" the earth, and who would fain drag down this great profession to accommodate the size of their own puny minds. But men whose natural bias seems to find scope in arming men daily, and training them in the best methods of slaughtering each other at a word, for an idea, should be viewed with caution.

By the way, let us alter slightly the position of our telescopes, so as to obtain a bird's eye view of our District Nurses' *environment* from yet another aspect. For you may credit it or no, it is far too true to be a fabrication, viz.—that this "glorified" band are far too busy usually to find time to make our Nurses at home in their midst, to "find time" to make ready for their breakfast, as they have been found times and again on their rounds upon an empty stomach, or terribly delayed in starting thereon, to "find time" to properly prepare any other meal, or to "find time" to hear any messenger's knock at the door during the day. And we, Sir, in the comfort of our *sleek* respectability, and the glory of our inexhaustible charity, are quite content to stand supinely by without either protest or resistance, to see this defenceless and hard working band of women thus treated, who are, perhaps, more than in any other department of Nursing, toiling on *single-handed*, exposed to all kinds of weathers and task-masters, in constant danger of infectious disease and death, death as sudden as on the battle-field, and yet never throw down a word of cheer; nor offer to lend them a helping hand in the discharge of their oftentimes difficult and disappointing task. Imagine, if you can, the life of slavery and tyranny—aye, and martyrdom too—these women have had, in thus acting as scape-goats for the entire community aforesaid; held responsible for the sins of the whole tribe, and yet left entirely without the *slightest* power to manage, or authority to correct, any one of these floundering stage-players.

Indeed, Sir, we have known Committees—aye, and Matrons too—who have never manifested common courtesy and moral courage enough to say "thank you," nor taken the trouble to write these Nurses a testimonial, after years of earnest and faithful service. For all these Matrons and committees, particularly those of them who have been sweating our Private Nurses out of their hard-earned *surplus monies*, by way of sounding their own trumpets in forming District Nursing enterprises, no condemnation can be too strong. And those *sardonic* Matrons, who have during the decade just dying deliberately turned a deaf ear unto the gentle remonstrances of their Nurses, been so awfully anxious to please everybody else, and to employ the spare moments of those Private Nurses upon sewing, by way of raising funds for those districts,

let us fain hope that these, too, may learn a lesson from the recent painful disclosures, may be constrained to pause and ponder the path of their feet. How appallingly cheap our philanthropy has been! We might each one of us venture to ask the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Then, if we cannot answer it honestly in the affirmative, it is high time to commence a Mission to the "glorified heathens" sanctified at home, and cease to trouble about the foreigners. And should this meet the eye of any Matron or Committee falling under this strong condemnation, if the cap fits let them pull it down tight. So much for a glimpse of our District Nurses' *environment* as seen through other men's telescopes.

"Be just and tolerant. Is there a bitterer cup for any man to drink than that he tastes when he falls irrevocably in his own esteem? The next bitterest is when a relative or dear friend falls; and we have to look on and see that he has fallen. Forgive him, excuse him, we may; but to put him in his old place again is not possible. It is our inner consciousness that does make cowards of us all, the remembrance, of our own deeds that makes us dread the look of others, fearing they know of us what we know of ourselves. Our dark deeds haunt us; remorse humbles us, cowers us; and makes us fear and tremble in the presence of our fellow-men.

"In our solitude how we go over the past; with what keen remorse and bitter humiliation! How inexorable is that word 'Past!' No undoing possible, no living over again, no washing out the stains. It may seem hard, but God is just; and as *good deeds* carry their *reward*, so *ill deeds* must bear their *punishment*. We cannot deceive ourselves, however successfully we may fool the world."

"DESPOTISM causes intellectual poverty. The system is false to nature that trains man simply to obey; the only true system is one that trains human beings to *think*. The man who cannot think, who acts without thought, is simply the obedient servant in carrying out another's thought. There can be no progress without originality, and there can be no originality where men are forbidden to inquire and reflect upon their observations."

To those who will object to my plain language, I reply in the words of Swift: "But religion, they tell us, ought not to be ridiculed, and they tell us truth; yet surely the corruptions may; for we are taught by the tritest maxim in the world, that religion being the best of things, its corruptions are likely to be the worst."

As my letter has already grown too long, the recapitulation must await a subsequent one.—Yours very faithfully,
THE YORKSHIREMAN.

COMPETITIVE PRIZE ESSAY. TWENTY-SECOND COMPETITION.

A Book or Books of the value of One Guinea will be awarded for an Essay upon a subject to be announced next week.

RULES.

1.—Contributions must reach the Editor, at the office of THE NURSING RECORD, addressed as follows:—"Prize Essay Competition, THE NURSING RECORD, St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, London, E.C."

2.—Manuscript must be written distinctly in ink and on one side of the paper only, upon not less than 24 nor more than 48 pages of ordinary-sized ruled sermon paper. The pages must be numbered and fastened together.

3.—The real and full name and address (stating whether Miss or Mrs., of the Competitor must be inscribed on the back of each contribution, and notification of which Hospital or Institution the Competitor has been or is attached to.

4.—Trained Nurses or those personally associated with Nursing work only allowed to compete.

Winners in previous Competitions are permitted to compete, but in case of a "tie" the prize would be awarded to the Competitor who has not secured a prize before.

The decision of the Prize Essay Editor to be final, and any infringement of the above Rules will be considered a disqualification.