

the leaders of this movement. If such give you a character they will add no damning clause to it, pick no holes in your coat lest others should, anticipate no objections lest they should be thought to be blinded by a childish partiality. The object of all such women would be to "serve" you, and not play the game into your enemies' hand; in other words, these women would be desirous to become, in the highest and noblest sense of the word, "Servants of the People."

A working man says: "Disguise it how you will, the clergy are the born enemies of the masses and of education." The satire is a sad one, and viewed from this aspect it is not difficult to apprehend at least *one* of the true causes of many of our most worthy District Nurses' overthrow; and this, Sir, I say to the shame of the "white chokers," after more than twenty years' observation and practical knowledge of the matter at issue. Don't let's have any more beating about the bush; call a spade a spade, and a spoon a spoon. "Dishes of skimmed milk," forsooth! We've had plenty and to spare of these already. Even that liberal soul'd and broad-minded partisan, Archdeacon Farrar, has at length been led to own that "Christianity has been more sorely wounded in the house of its friends than by its enemies." The extract above mentioned reads thus:—

"Roman Catholic Nurses.—The Ladies' Committee at Basingstoke have dismissed the District Nurse on discovering that she was a Roman Catholic; the advertisement was for a 'Christian woman,' and the action of the Committee has been severely criticised. The Matron of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital has lately joined the Roman Catholic Church, much to the consternation of the Committee of Management, but they have stopped short of calling upon her to resign."

Happily for the world, forms and ceremonies are lifeless things; things that will pass away when an age of barbarism, comparatively speaking, is gone. Inasmuch as error, ignorance, selfishness, sensuality, hatred, and hypocrisy are the devil and his angels; and the darkened mind, the impure heart, the unfaithful conscience are hell.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not," suggests "The Yorkshire-man"; for there can be nothing more estimable than the manly firmness of character, as foreshadowed in an honest and disinterested search for the truth, particularly concerning great and difficult problems, "they say" (as you will undoubtedly agree) being frequently a very big liar. And to put the mildest possible construction upon such controversies as the one at issue, it has long been clear to my own mind, and to the minds of a goodly number of my countrymen and countrywomen of this generation, that the good Christians and the white chokers are the people who are benighted; seeing that whilst such *religious tyranny*, as is self-evident in the cutting in question remains possible, our entire religious systems remain to the thinking mind a bundle of contradictions; in other words, a pack of ridiculous nonsense and mockery. Be not deceived; we are most of us worshipping idols yet.

If I might make a suggestion, it would be, "Leave every man's" (ay, and every woman's, too) "religion to his own conscience. No mediation is required between man and his God. Confession is the natural result of an undue magnifying of their priestly functions by the clergy. The practice is rapidly increasing, and if it becomes generally advocated the last sands of the 'Protestant' Church will be running, and the end near at hand. I denounce all clergymen that advocate confession as Jesuits; men who have no right to preach as members of the Reformed Church, the 'Protestant' Church; men who would rob man of his liberty; men who are striving to restore the tyranny of the past. Confession and absolution should be opposed by *every man*; their only authority is in that love of power inherent in so many minds." "And," says Norman McLeod, "a man's charity to those who differ from him upon great and difficult questions will be in the ratio of his own knowledge of them. The more knowledge the more charity."

One plain word in conclusion. In this last decade of the nineteenth century, we want neither white chokers nor black ones, but simply real live ministers of the Gospel in every sense of the words. I denounce those demure partisans (clerical and religious committees), who have so often stood like "blockers" against the advance and progress of our increasing army of Nursing sisters—district or otherwise. What has theology got to do with these sanitary ministers? Nothing at all. How comes it to pass, then, that our Nurses and Matrons must sell both body and soul for those dying old creeds of ours? Tell me honestly, has woman ever had the encouragement, kindly treatment, educational advantages accorded to man?

James Coates, Ph.D., F.A.S., says, "As a woman she is stronger in many characteristics than man, who is as a man stronger in many characteristics than the woman. That is all; who then is the weakest? Who shall answer? God grant that each man may learn to fulfil his allotted sphere as creditably and as truly as woman has shown herself capable of doing. Who is inferior? Who shall answer? It is an idle question; the outcome of animal strength, brute force, the physical dominance of man, the creature of his stronger passions and physical strength, not of his better self, which finds in woman his other half, nor in or from Him who from the beginning made them to be one flesh."

With compliments and thanks, standing or falling,—I remain, yours truly,
OLD JONATHAN.

COMPETITIVE PRIZE ESSAY. TWENTY-FOURTH COMPETITION.

A Book or Books of the value of One Guinea will be awarded for an Essay upon the following subject:—

"Describe in full the amount and kind of help required in a Hospital laundry. The Hospital contains sixty-four beds; and there is a daily average of fifty-four patients. Their personal linen is not washed at the Hospital. The Staff consisting of House Surgeon, Matron, eight Nurses, and ten servants, there are about eighty Ward sheets fourteen quilts, fourteen blankets, eighty pillow-cases, towels, &c., besides the house linen, eighty Nurses' and Servants' aprons, and, of course, a large number of collars and cuffs, to be washed each week. The servants all wear cotton dresses, but not the Nurses. The washing is not to be done by machinery."

RULES.

1.—Contributions to be sent to 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.

NOTICE.—The Prize Essay Editor will not undertake to return MSS. unless accompanied with a sufficiently stamped addressed envelope; and in no case will he be responsible for any loss of same during transmission, &c. In no case must manuscripts be rolled up when sent by post; they must be folded.

Owing to great pressure upon our space, the Serial Story, "The Vicar's Daughter," is unavoidably held over until next week.

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