

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY *VERSUS* TYRANNY—  
WHICH?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—Whilst appreciating her criticism, it is transparently clear to my own mind that your correspondent, "Ebor," has not yet broken off the old bondage, still feels as though she were living in the feudal times, I think. What I feel about the matter is that if we cannot give unto our oppressed fellow-workers "a lift" upwards, it is, to say the least, our duty to abstain from dealing them the "cut behind." This applies all round. Our Hospitals are *not* sectarian institutions; so if the cap fits, let us hasten to don and wear it. I would protest against sitting in judgment upon *any* oppressed sister whilst she's passing through the crucible, especially in a matter of this sort, and in times like ours.

On the other hand, that skilful tactician, Miss Clayton, has hit the mark; and, undoubtedly, were we each to adopt her ideal, though we might fall short of reaching it, one half the wrongs which now exist in the Nursing profession would *right themselves* forthwith. For the time draws on apace when, in every case, our religion must become "individual and personal." There should be no blinking matters now; "glorify me" will not last for ever. And who cares a button about those obsolete creeds of ours? Surely we have been falling down quite long enough before the shrine of the "golden calf." I would contend, then, that it is immaterial which of these win the day; let us have right *versus* might, and the creeds may go and welcome, any time. The Church of the future, be it remembered, will be the Church which first realises the world's great need, and rises equal to it, and none other. None of your demoralising subterfuges; let us have the pure and the good men to the front, not those "godly" men who would slaughter you to save a lifeless creed.

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth," we read; for whilst many have been in a sound sleep, the times have passed when men thought of religion merely as to whether this sect was right or that sect was wrong. "To be able to benefit others is a condition of freedom and superiority." The religion of to-day, then, should find its outcome in the life of man. "Not, truly, in fastings and prayers, for these are relics of a priesthood we cannot own; not in churches and chapels, for these are mere survivals of the ancient altars whereon everything that was pure and good was often sacrificed to the blind idolatry of the gods."

Finally, "Religion," as the churches define it, is a thing of the past; let us have instead that "religion" as defined by *liberal thought*—viz., "Whatever increases the happiness of man; not the blind worship of the one, but many powers; making of man a better being in every way; his life brightened by the consciousness of duties faithfully performed to God, and his desire to acquire gratified, with the object of being kind and charitable, so as to soften and brighten the ways of existence to those who have found life harder." Then away with your scruples; we must not allow our worthy co-workers to be overthrown in this way time after time for a creed. Let us show evidence of the faith that is within us, arise in the name of our God and humanity, and put the aliens to flight. Why are we so lethargic about this matter, allowing our worthy comrades to lie languishing half-dead upon the wayside of life, whilst we are bombastically thinking God we are not as other men are? Small wonder that mankind should be considering whether as an institution the priesthood ought not to be abolished.—Yours truly,

VETERAN.

## THE MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION BILL.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—In the *British Medical Journal* of May 2, the editorial department stated that the above Bill was with-

drawn, and that the Lord President had given a "virtual pledge" to grant a Select Committee. On seeing this I wrote, and found that the above "virtual pledge" had not been given.

In the journal of May 23, Dr. Farquharson, M.P., says he still believes the above "virtual pledge" was given, and he quotes the Lord President's remarks. I have read these remarks, and fail to find any "virtual" or other promise.

Dr. Farquharson next asks me to lay before the public the Lord President's reply to my question. There is no call for doing so. His Lordship stated that he does "not think it necessary to correct anonymous statements," and also, "the Government is under no pledge through me, and anyone is welcome to know that." If Dr. Farquharson is not content with this, then perhaps he will communicate with the Lord President. I understand that Dr. Farquharson is one of the paid staff of the journal. If he is, then why was the above "editorial" inserted without verification? Such serious statements should always be signed. And here I would remark that if a signed letter is placed in a journal, readers take it for what it is worth; whereas if the same statement is put in as an editorial, "we," the average subscriber, takes it for gospel.

As to Mr. F. Pease's letter, I can only say it is a pity laymen interfere with medical affairs. He says he judges from the number of petitions sent in against the Bill that the opposition is limited. Was Mr. Pease, or anyone else, able to get up one single petition in favour of the Bill? Not one. So much for his criticisms.

I would add that it will give most medical men much pleasure to notice that at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal College of Physicians, London, both Drs. Priestley and Playfair strongly urged the necessity of improving the education of medical students in Midwifery.

I go so far as to say that the present "education" of the medical student in Midwifery, diseases of women and of infants, is almost a national disgrace and danger, and I trust that Dr. Glover will persevere in his efforts to have an improvement carried out. Some time ago I sent a letter on this subject to the *British Medical Journal*, but because it had appeared in the *Lancet* and *Provincial Medical Journal* it was suppressed.

I shall only add that until the General Medical Council has perfected the education of the student in Midwifery and diseases of infants, I shall oppose the passing of any Midwives' Bill. All the "improvements" recommended in the Bill can be carried out without the aid of any Act of Parliament. Here lies the test of the advocates of State Registration of Midwives.—I am, yours faithfully,

ROBERT REID RENFOLD.

Liverpool, May 25, 1891.

## THE NURSES' CO-OPERATION

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—Will you permit me to say that, splendidly as you have exposed the system of Nurse sweating in vogue at the London and Westminster Hospitals, you could do the Nurses still more good by advocating the co-operating system amongst them, and by advertising more widely, and with approval, the Nurses' Co-operation, 8, New Cavendish Street, Portland Place, W., an Association established to secure to Nurses the full remuneration for their work. Doubtless you have good reason for being discreetly silent on this new movement, but the Hospitals which make enormous incomes out of the labour of their Nurses and Probationers are already beginning to boycott the Co-operation, and I know of more

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)