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## EDITORIAL.

### THE SOUL OF NURSING.

We can hardly touch upon any question of social reform which does not affect the work and the interests of intelligent, educated nurses, for the term "trained nursing" has an ever-widening meaning and scope, and its aims are preventive as well as curative.

Nurses of the present day have a much greater knowledge of the evil in the world than those of the past. That bare fact shows very significant and important progress; because, with wider knowledge of existing evil, comes the stronger, more passionate aspiration to abolish it, and to make our beloved country cleaner, and therefore healthier and happier. We are well aware, for instance, of the widespread evil caused by the preventable infection of venereal disease. We are up against that accusing fact, also that in spite of the numerous public health agencies, that are doing such excellent work, these preventable things are not prevented. Nevertheless, there is another side to the melancholy picture, which fills us with encouragement and hope. Endued with power that comes of knowledge and adequate training, nurses are beginning to realize themselves. When all stultifying limits and barriers to progress are removed, and the full powers of nurses (more especially social service nurses) are liberated, the opportunities of our profession will be boundless.

There is a beautiful expression in a well-known hymn;—"fire of love." It is just this fire of love—love for our fellow-creatures which is the highest form of love, which impels enlightened men and women, whose consciences are aroused to a sense of their corporate responsibilities as their weaker brothers' and sisters' "keepers," to desire more power to do more and more

good in the world, which is "white already to harvest." The one supreme hindrance to progress which has for so many years strangled endeavour, and stultified effort, has now been removed. Women are now enfranchised citizens. All conscientious nurses endued with the "fire of love" and having the necessary qualifications will realize that they dare not repudiate their responsibilities in this matter. They are fully aware also of the high privilege of having a voice—through their representatives—in the Councils of the Nation.

Questions of public health are now being recognized as vitally important to the future welfare of our great Empire, and the next Parliament—the first that will be elected by *the people* (women as well as men) will have to deal with them, and none will be more competent than well-trained, educated nurses.

Hitherto the emphasis upon the work and usefulness of nurses has been placed too much upon the heart, and too little upon the head. We do not mean for a moment to minimize the importance of the former, the highest qualities of the heart are needed, but an *understanding* heart is what is most required. A woman who is all heart and has no head will make as bad a nurse as the one who is unbalanced in the other direction. The soul of nursing consists of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength and knowledge, combined in a well-balanced whole.

Thus equipped, and with the opportunities and powers referred to above, we believe that trained nurses will, in the near future, take a large share in the reforms and destinies of their country. The way will not be easy, the path will not be smooth. There will be vested interests and other antagonisms to combat, but—

"I hold that it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
To follow up the worthiest till he die."

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