

they had no care for the anxieties of a possible break-down in health or the haunting spectre of a poverty-stricken old age. In their vocation their spiritual and intellectual growth was fostered rather than otherwise, for we find that long hours were set aside for meditation. But to the nurses the time when they are allowed to be away from their wards is, in most cases, of comparatively little value to them because, physically, they are worn out. Have not psychologists, politicians and all students of human nature shown us that the inevitable results of overwork when combined with the loss of free will and self-determination, invariably lead to deterioration in what may be described as ethical qualities. The dismal rehearsal at Manchester the other day was not one calculated to increase the self-respect of the nurses who listened to it, or to cause them to feel any stimulus from the halo which the kindly Dean metaphorically pressed with both hands upon their humble heads. Let the nurses cease to be treated as "children of an older class," to have the power to judge right or wrong crushed out of them, and we have little fear but that they will prove equal to their responsibilities both to their profession and their patients. At the present time even the knowledge to enable them to judge the truth is withheld from them and not the most eloquent discourse on ethics will serve to camouflage the misrepresentations that have characterised the methods used to induce nurses to wreck the Registration Bill.

It requires only a knowledge of the truth to set the nurses free and in the light of the determination of the hospital authorities to prevent this, we must call upon each of our members to do her best to inform her fellow-nurses of the position of affairs in the present crisis. We have to rely upon such individual effort the more because we have to fight our battle on money subscribed by the nurses from their all too slender salaries, and not on charitable doles from the public who, in most cases have not the faintest idea of the use to which their subscriptions will be put. In many cases it may mean taking off the gloves to bring about a better condition of things, but few real reforms are gained without strife, and certainly but for the present controversy we should not have seen certain of the hospitals hurriedly developing schemes to shorten hours and to raise salaries.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Whilst welcoming communications from its Members the Corporation does not hold itself responsible for individual expressions of opinion.

THE GOOD OF THE GREATEST NUMBER.

To the Secretary R.B.N.A.

DEAR MADAM,—I am very glad that you put in that very clear article about the years of grace clause, for this has been used very widely indeed as a lever by the College members to induce nurses

to try to wreck the Bill for State Registration, and to prejudice them against the Societies who have done all the work which the College is now imitating, so far as they can do so without giving the nurses more power than its Council thinks they ought to get. I wonder whether those people who are responsible for the scare realise their personal responsibility and how they will absolve their own consciences, for they know perfectly well that if our Bill were allowed to pass conditions would soon be very different for nurses. They are comfortable enough but they are not in a position to know what our struggle is. To me it seems "the limit" to find them on a platform expounding ethics to us. I call it washing the outside of the cup and platter with a vengeance, and in their hearts those ladies know it. It seems to me that language is the most deceptive thing on earth and that the people who regard themselves as the salt of the earth and make profession of Christianity, are always the people who let down their fellows whenever their own interests are in danger of being adversely affected by what is for the good of "the greatest number."

I am, etc.,
ALICE CATTELL, M.R.B.N.A.

EXPEDIENCY NOT CONVERSION.

To the Secretary, R.B.N.A.

DEAR MADAM,—I cannot tell you how indignant I feel about the College people making such efforts to wreck our Bill. It is just wealth and social influence setting itself against justice. These people know very well that a chance has come for the nurses for which they have waited for many, many years and their behaviour now proves that their profession of faith about State Registration was but one of expediency and not one of conversion to the real interests of the nurses. It is so treacherous and poor and mean to see the Matrons ranked against the nurses, but they know so little of what life out in the world really is, and they have forgotten what it is like to be young. They think nursing should be a vocation but ought not every work to be a vocation to the person who undertakes it? The amount of sentiment that is brought into nursing management to take the place of justice is responsible for a very great amount of suffering and ill-health which should never have arisen and for many a heartache too. We could listen too with more patience to all the sentiment and platitudes if we did not know that the people who preach them at us generally are those who have secured large salaries and "cushy" quarters for themselves.

How tired you must be with this battle of might against right. I liked what you said about our covenanting together in the speech at the protest meeting.

Yours truly,
M.R.B.N.A.

(signed) ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

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