

A long discussion took place at the close of Miss Klaassen's excellent address.

There will be no further Saturday afternoon meetings at Orchard Street until the holidays are over, but we hope to commence these meetings again in October and we shall be very glad to hear from nurses who will be willing to address them.

CATFISH.

A lively argument recently took place on the steps of the hall leading to the Midwifery Conference between a strong supporter of the College of Nursing and some members of the organised societies of nurses. The former told us that she was sending us a letter setting out views on the necessity for unity, and although the postman has, up to the present, neglected to deliver the missive, courtesy presses us to proceed with its reply. During the conversation alluded to the College member, whilst stating that she was quite in favour of a Trade Union for Nurses, and thought it a good thing, held strongly to the view that all hope for the profession lay in "unity," forgetting that in this very imperfect world there must of necessity be destruction as well as construction, that you cannot build good out of evil, and that, to use the words of one great writer, "all progress is strife to the end." With infinite perseverance she advocated her view that each society "should keep to its own work" and should refrain from interference with, or criticism of, the College of Nursing, Ltd. She was evidently quite blissfully ignorant of the fact that her College, instead of proving itself an educational body, had not merely interfered with the functions of the organised societies but had tried, backed by social influence and the so-called Nation's Fund for Nurses, to usurp those functions altogether with such amendment as would secure a sort of feudal domination for the employers over the workers. As to criticism it was pointed out that, if methods of raising money such as some which had been introduced into the profession by the College supporters, were persevered with, the profession could not hope to hold the respect which it formerly has had from the British public generally. Various delinquencies were enumerated by the independent nurses, among them "the Juliet appeal." "Ah, but that was a mistake," pleaded our friend apologetically. "Yes, but you thanked Lord Burnham for making the mistake in your Annual Report," came the quick retort.

Thinking over the episode later, we were irresistibly reminded of a paragraph in one of the works of Charles Marriott, where he tells of an ingenious North Sea fisherman who, finding that the cod in his tanks arrived at the market in a flabby condition, hit upon the expedient of introducing into each tank a catfish, with the result that its fellow-travellers—the cod—always arrived at their destination with their muscles in good order owing to continual stimulation by their unwelcome companion. If, therefore, the ethics of the College of Nursing are inclined to grow flabby,

as it gives us every reason to believe, the day may yet arrive when its members will look back with gratitude to the societies for their efforts to stimulate its directorate to a more robust and independent standard of conduct.

We were struck by the remark of one working nurse, on the interview above referred to, "Surely all members of the College Council cannot approve of its disingenuous methods. If only each person, each member of the profession, would fight each bit of evil as it meets her, there would not be so much left for us to fight." But they don't; hence the catfish! There are in the nursing profession, as in the community generally, those so developed that they consider one standard of ethics as the only legitimate one, while there are others who claim that, for the group, a lower is permissible, or at least they permit the world to believe that they do. Doubtless each member of it feels that she may shift her responsibility on to her neighbour, and, when the catfish probes, would fain plead with it to keep to its own corner of the tank and allow the peaceable cod to keep still in theirs that peace and unity may reign in the tank. But this may not be, for, percolating through the soul life of the universe, bringing its strange psychic force to bear now here and now there, is ever "the queer, unpleasant, disturbing touch of the Kingdom of Heaven."

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S HOSPITAL FOR OFFICERS REUNION.

A very delightful evening was spent at 9, Upper Wimpole Street, on July 8th, when Mrs. Herbert Paterson, the wife of our popular Hon. Medical Secretary, was at home to old patients, and to those who had been on the nursing staff of Queen Alexandra's Hospital for Officers, Highgate, during the years of war. About eighty patients were present, many having come to London from long distances in order to attend; among them one from the extreme north of Scotland.

The entertainment was exceedingly varied and as was fitting, several artistes contributed who had been well-known and much appreciated on somewhat similar occasions in the old days at Highgate. Miss Varrick's songs were as amusing as ever, but none of her new ones surpassed in popularity that old favourite of the Q.A.H.O., "Mike's Bike." Miss Glover's singing also met with the old hearty appreciation and Mr. Stannard's topical song, narrating supposed episodes in the lives of the two chief pundits of the Q.A.H.O., excited great amusement. There were a number of lightning drawings by Mr. Todd and a display of lantern slides showing various aspects of the hospital and a gallery of hospital photographs in the large consulting room. Dancing lasted from 11.30 p.m. till 2 a.m., the music being supplied by a contingent of the band of H.M. Royal Horse Guards.

(Signed) ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

10, Orchard Street, W. 1.

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