

the passage of the liberal and just Act for State Registration of Nurses throughout the United Kingdom. The Act was won solely through the energy of the leaders of the State Registration movement, and well those, who formerly opposed the measure, know this to be true, however ready they may now be to "steal the laurels" that rightly belong to those who "held on" when "heart and nerve and sinew," when everything seemed gone, except the will that said to them, "hold on."

And if the "heads" of the profession are not too proud to "gather where they have not strayed," it is not surprising that, in another direction, neither are the rank and file. It is worse than demoralising to the character of the nurses to find their employers, matrons, and the British public approving a system of widespread public begging, such as would be tolerated by no other class, whether professional or otherwise. In *forma pauperis* the nurses stand before the public! In *forma pauperis* they are regarded by the public! What is worse still, in *forma pauperis* they stand before themselves, unblushingly content to eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table, instead of shouldering their responsibilities and their *opportunities* and becoming masters in their own house.

Somewhere in a wise old book (Ezekiel), a book rich in profound, esoteric wisdom, we find the words: "And He (God) said unto me, Stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee." Therein lies the answer which the British public might well have given to the nurses of to-day. Let our efforts to help them be what they may; *nothing* will ever give them any real help until they are prepared to "stand upon their feet." "Give them of your charity," says Lady Cowdray. "Give them of your charity," pleads the Hon. Sir Arthur Stanley. "Give them of your charity" faces us from the lay press and from the street hoardings; but, like a clarion call to the nurses, there comes ever from the free nurses' pens, "STAND UP, NURSES! STAND UPON YOUR FEET." Stand up each one of you in her own place and give of brain and sinew to the upbuilding of that mighty fabric—a New Profession.

Her Royal Highness, the President, graciously sent to the nurses several tickets for the Royal seats at the performance given by the Merry Gitana's Company at the St. Marylebone Institute last Saturday afternoon. We learn that the nurses greatly enjoyed the entertainment. A little duet by a page and a wood nymph "brought down the house," and the dancing of the children was most charming. The programme was long and delightfully varied.

Nurses are reminded of the lecture to be given at 10, Orchard Street, on Saturday, 12th inst., at 3 p.m., by Miss Holman, on the subject of "School Nursing." The charge for admission, inclusive of tea, will be one shilling.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ARE NURSES INCAPABLE OF MANAGING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS?

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

MADAM,—By a curious coincidence the Report of the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund, and that of the Nation's Fund were published in the same week. There is a very striking difference at the start in these two reports. Both are published in the beginning of February of this year with this difference: the Annuity Fund publishes its Report for 1920, having already apparently given an account of its affairs up to the close of the previous year. The Nation's Fund Report only carries us up to the end of 1919 and covers not one, but two-and-a-half years. Comment is superfluous, but I intend to give my benevolent contributions to the Fund which issues a clear statement, and is up-to-date. Again the Annuity Fund set out a list of subscribers; why don't the nurses receive similar information from the Nation's Fund as to who are their benefactors? The Annuity Fund is kept up by methods which have never degraded our professional status. I have seen no posters on the hoardings for it. "Nurse Juliet" has given it no help to obtain funds, and it has never caused me to blush with shame when my patient has opened his morning paper.

Yet, after all the publicity, what do we find on opening the two reports. In the case of the Annuity Fund over £1,000 have been given away to sick or needy nurses in one year and that "there are no salaried officials." In the case of the Nation's Fund over £2,000 have been given to the nurses in *two-and-a-half years* while salaries have come to £1,192 10s. I made enquiry as to how the Annuity Fund is run without paying salaries, and I find that the Hon. Secretary considers that she would be a poor creature who would take a salary for doing work for a benevolent fund for her own profession. I find that another nurse is in the habit of going to the office daily to help with the clerical work, and the R.B.N.A. allows the accountant to do all the difficult part of the book-keeping. I think, therefore, after my comparisons you will agree that the tone of patronage towards nurses all through the text of the Nation's Fund Report is misplaced, and that the management of the Nurses' Benevolent Fund shows that nurses are *perfectly* capable of managing their own business. Is it quite in good taste, quite in keeping with the principle of not letting your right hand know what your left hand doeth, to use money collected in the cause of charity to insert full-sized photographs of the promoters of the Nation's Fund resplendent in evening dress and ropes of pearls? It appears to me in very bad taste.

Yours truly,

L. BENNETT.

19, Ladbrooke Road, W.1.

ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

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