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EDITORIAL.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

Two acts of heroism recorded during the past week, one on the part of a medical woman, the other on that of a trained nurse, remind us of the sudden calls which may be made upon members of these professions for an exhibition of qualities which make demands upon the personality, as well as the skill, of their members, that mere mechanical skill will never suffice to make the highest type of either medical practitioners or nurses, because they deal with the humanities, and the human factor therefore enters largely into their success.

In the one instance we have Mrs. Starr, a medical missionary at Peshawur (who herself some years ago saw her husband murdered by fanatics), who volunteered, and has been permitted to go to Miss Ellis, at Khanki Bazar. News has been received that Miss Ellis is weak, and her feet bruised and bleeding, but she is otherwise well. The arrival of the doctor, and the relief of the medical treatment, will mean much to the captive, but the consolation to her in her isolation and sorrow of the company of an older woman cannot be overrated.*

The action of Nurse Langley, a nurse in the employ of the Mile End Board of Guardians, who, as we record in another column, plunged fully dressed into the Regent's Canal and rescued a child from drowning, is also worthy of note.

Both doctor and nurse, we feel sure, would say that they only did their duty, and there is therefore no need to extol their actions. While this may be true, the lesson remains. In times of exceptional stress and danger we act almost automatically, according to the character we have developed throughout life. Unselfish and

* As we go to press we learn that Mrs. Starr and Miss Ellis have arrived at Peshawur.

heroic actions, publicly recognised, are not the inspiration of the moment, but the natural sequence of many such actions performed quietly and unostentatiously.

There is a very special obligation on both doctors and nurses to practise unselfishness and to build up a habit of fortitude, for in time of sudden danger and calamity it is they who should voluntarily subject themselves to dangers which others may not be called upon to undergo. To their credit be it said that they almost invariably rise to the occasion, however high the heroism demanded of them. Both the medical and nursing professions have behind them a long roll of illustrious members "who loved not their lives unto the death," but who were willing to run any risks to render service to suffering humanity.

The present is a pleasure-seeking age, and although there are to-day many nurses who are examples of what a Registered Nurse should be, there is a danger lest the Nursing Profession should be infected by the love of ease and pleasure which is characteristic of the age in which we live. The conditions under which nurses live during their training, the hours of work, and the rates of pay, no longer make demands upon the self-sacrifice of those who adopt nursing as a profession. Rather it affords a congenial sphere of work. Opportunities for exhibiting unselfish devotion, which no doubt are numerous, may not always be utilised; but now, when for the first time the members of our profession have an opportunity of dissociating themselves from those who in the past have claimed to belong to it, while shirking the necessary training, we hope nurses will so order their lives that the right to use the title of Registered Nurse will be associated in the public mind with a love of humanity, devotion to duty, unselfish action, and dignity of personal conduct.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)