

remuneration, but after twenty-five years' service each nurse is entitled to a pension from the State; and the private nurses also, by a special scheme (not connected with the State), and a system of regular payments, can compound for a very fair pension indeed. Miss Lind and Miss Brandberg speak very strongly of the necessity for high ethical standards and for those ideals which have done so much to raise our profession to the high place which it holds, but at the same time they and all members of their Association are definitely convinced that the economic position of the nurses should be such as to secure to them independence, and to safeguard them from the necessity of having to accept help from others.

We bade our Scandinavian visitors good-bye with many expressions of regret, but yet with feelings, too, that we had made a very pleasant and lasting friendship; some day we hope to visit them in their own city of Stockholm, and at least we may expect to meet at Helsingfors, and to spend many happy hours with them there. On the morning when they left the Club we were charged with a message to all the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association: "Will you please tell all the members of the Association that we have loved staying at their Club so very, very much. We would like them all to know this." And then, a few hours later, there were many handshakings, many expressions of regret at parting and of hope that we should again entertain Scandinavia, and our friends were soon hurrying from London, which they had found "so very big" leaving behind them very stimulating impressions of their fine professional *esprit de corps*, of their keen interest in international nursing affairs, and of a frank and kindly friendship that made us feel that common interests and a common love for our profession had, for ourselves, brought England and Scandinavia very near together during the short fortnight when we had our first Swedish visitors at Queen's Gate. We sincerely hope that they will not be our last.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PRIVATE NURSING.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am very interested in Sister Macdonald's paper on private nursing. It gives us much to think about, and her writings are always good and helpful because, while she punctuates the value of ideals, she remembers that they must be planted in the good ground of common sense if they are to bear fruit.

Too many people regard them as dreams of their early days of nursing work, and adopt the view that private nursing is, after all, "a dull, colourless thing," and yet it can be "altogether lovely" if we try to see all the good in it and realise that we do not live for ourselves alone. I remember, as a child, having pointed out to me in a gallery Sir Noel Paton's picture, "The Man with the Muck Rake." It made a great impression on me, though my childish mind could not interpret its meaning. But it was hinted to me that it had a very deep meaning, and I was left with its

problems. Then experience after experience came to me, and I had only to use my powers of observation to find, as I passed through life, many men and many women intent on their muck rakes. A livelihood, hard cash, a competency, all these have their place in life, but they do not represent its main or even its most important purpose as so many nurses, whom I have met, seem to imagine. But too often they take too large a place in our thoughts, and all the fine things of private nursing, all the lessons it brings, all the opportunities, all the varied experiences are practically non-existent because we think only of the scrapings under the muck rake. With minds fixed on these alone we go out to each case thinking that the only purpose of our going is to earn a livelihood, in many cases we come back into very sordid surroundings rather than go where there are more beautiful surroundings, just that we may save a shilling or two. A bus fare is too costly a matter to allow of our entering some storehouse of the treasures of art when we have an hour to spare. On the other hand, there are some who spend all they have on things that are purely evanescent, that bring to them nothing of permanent value to mind or character, and the result in both cases is that the mind is starved, becomes more or less fossilised through being always kept in a fixed position (*i.e.*, on the Muck Rake), and so its owner becomes a machine ready to be tired all the time because she has not cultivated tastes which will nourish the mind and keep its real vitality alive.

It would be quite good to arrange to have the Debating Society tackle the question of private nursing. I am sure that if the meeting were made widely known we should have a large attendance and a very helpful, stimulating discussion.—Yours, &c.,

A PRIVATE NURSE.

DONATIONS.

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ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

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