

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

No. 1,855.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1923.

Vol. LXXI

EDITORIAL.

"THE GLORIOUS PRIVILEGE OF BEING INDEPENDENT."

The new Rector of St. Andrews University (Dr. Rudyard Kipling, LL.D.), in his Rectorial Address to the students of St. Andrews University, chose as his theme thrift and independence.

Independence means, said the speaker, "Let every herring hang by its own head." It signifies the blessed state of hanging on to as few persons and things as possible, and it leads up to the singular privilege of a man owning himself. The desire for independence has been, up to the present, an eradicable human instinct, antedating even the social instinct.

After emphasising the power of the tribe over the individual, from the earliest ages, the Rector said: "The past ten years have so immensely quickened and emphasised all means of communication, visible and invisible, in every direction that our world—which is only another name for the tribe—is not merely 'too much with us,' but moves, shouts and moralises about our path and our bed, through every hour of our days and nights. . . . Some men accept this omnipresence of crowds; some may resent it. It is to the latter that I am speaking. The independence that was a 'glorious privilege' in Robert Burns' day is now more difficult to achieve than when one had merely to overcome a few material obstacles, and the rest followed almost automatically.

But the Rector pointed out that, even so, there is no need for the individual who intends to own himself to be too pessimistic, and enumerated three special blessings enjoyed by his constituents. "First," he said, "thanks to the continuity of self-denial on the part of your own forebears, the bulk of you will enter professions and callings in which you will be free men . . . free to exploit your own powers and your own health to the uttermost for your own ends.

"Your second blessing is that you carry in

your land's history, and in your hearts, the strongest instinct of inherited continuity, which expresses itself in your own passionate interest in your own folk, your own race, and all its values."

Concerning the third blessing, the Rector said: "I have already touched on the privilege of being broken by birth, custom, precept and example to doing without things. There is where the sons of the small houses, who have borne the yoke in their youth, hold a cumulative advantage over those with broad margins."

Dr. Kipling traces back to our remote ancestors the guidance that drives a man to own himself, and upholds him through his steps on that road. "The bidding comes, direct as a beam of light," from that past where man had grown into his present shape, and from a remoter one "whose creature, not yet man, felt within him that it was not well for him to jackal round another brute's kill, even if he went hungry for a while. . . . 'At any price that I can pay, let me own myself.' And the price is worth paying if you keep what you have bought. . . . For a man may apply his independence to what he calls worldly advantage, and discover too late that he laboriously has made himself dependent on a mass of external conditions for the maintenance of which he sacrificed himself. So he may be festooned with the whole haberdashery of success and go to his grave a castaway. Some men hold that the risk is worth taking. Others do not. It is to these I have spoken. 'Let the counsel of thine own heart stand, for there is no man more faithful unto thee than it.'"

Those of the Nursing Profession who see with sorrow the fine spirit of independence which formerly characterised it being sapped, will wish that Dr. Kipling's Address to the undergraduates of St. Andrews may be published far and wide. The independence which we esteem so highly that we are willing to practise self-denial to secure and to retain it, this is what counts in life, and compared with it "the whole haberdashery of success" is as nothing.

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