

strain to the nurse and discomfort to the patient (resulting in death in the case under consideration), one assistant nurse cannot possibly adapt the scientific methods in the care of the sick which constitute good nursing.

The British College of Nurses intends in the future to do all in its power to encourage and fit suitable girls for the profession of nursing. It is ennobling and satisfying work for the best of women.

We learn from *Kai Tiaki* that steps have been taken to perpetuate the memory of the New Zealand Nurses who made the Supreme Sacrifice in the Great War by donating a Bell to the Memorial Carillon. The idea as outlined by Miss Bicknell, A.R.R.C., Matron-in-Chief of the New Zealand Army Nursing Service, met with a ready response, and it was decided by the meeting which considered the matter that the bell should be donated by nurses only, and that no contributions be accepted from other people. All the bells of the Carillon are to be named, and it was decided to leave the naming of the Nurses' Bell to a later date, and to ask nurses to send in suggestions to the Hon. Secretary. On the top of the bell will be engraved the N.Z.A.N.S. Badge, the name of the bell, to whom it is dedicated, and by whom, and on the brass tablet in the Memorial Sanctuary will be inscribed the names of those New Zealand nurses and V.A.D.s who died on active service.

Various bells of the Carillon will be tolled on certain occasions, and the Nurses' Bell will be tolled on October 23rd, the date on which the *Marquette* was torpedoed, when out of thirty nurses on board ten were drowned.

A NOVEL COMPETITION.

The Editor has compiled a list, which has been handed in a sealed envelope to a Referee, of six novels which have helped to create important Social Reforms in reference to Nursing, Child-life in Workhouses, Slavery, Rural Sanitation, the Violation of Children, and Venereal Disease in Marriage.

Half-a-Guinea will be awarded to the writers of the first three correct lists opened, written on the form to be found on page iii of our Advertisement Supplement.

The lists must reach the Office of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 1, by the first post on February 21st, addressed to the Editor, and marked on the envelope "Novel Competition."

A VOCATIONAL ASPECT OF NURSING.

"If a doctor's life may not be a divine vocation, then no life is a vocation, and nothing is divine."

Thus speaks one who recognised his own calling and followed it faithfully. Certainly we may turn the phrase and say that if a nurse's life is not divine vocation then no life is a vocation. For the professions of medicine and nursing are mutually sustained, complementary, inextricably intermingled. Thus doctors and nurses have many things in common.

The popular imagination divides those who have vocation from those who have profession; but this illusion is a subtle thing and has no sure foundation. The mental barrier placed between the vocational merits of priesthood, involving the saving of souls, and of scholarship, involving the acquisition of sound mentality, and of medicine, involving the preservation of life appears to

be definite in the public mind—the first occupation being essentially vocational, the other two merely "professional." But all these occupations are indispensable constituents of a Christian civilisation. They are our common need. If we believe that for every essential need of our life there is provided some divine aid, then does it not follow that he who has an intimate relation to the supply of that need could reasonably be said to be called to his work? For what is vocation? It is to have for some special work a peculiar gift, and with that gift the impulse to use it. To those fitted for definite work this impulse is usually made manifest. It does not of necessity show itself in the presence of an Angel. Very few of us are accorded visions; yet many of us have been blessed with spiritual insight, none the less real if it be shown beneath a veil. We do not always give it its true name, even in our subconscious selves. We say, "I feel I must do so and so," or "Something prompted me," or "I had a great desire to do this work." And our friends tell us that we might just as well have selected almost any other work than that we have chosen, and, moreover, that we should have profited by it; but we know within our hearts that nothing else would have ever satisfied the secret, insistent urge to duty. This is spiritual insight. This is divine vocation.

Not all who are called to be nurses follow that calling. The reason of this is often a matter of opportunity rather than of conscience. "For many are called but few chosen."

There is also, unfortunately, abounding evidence that some follow the profession of nursing who were not called to be nurses.

It is with sorrow that we see so frequently in the commercial press foolish articles "advertising" nursing as a "paying job" in which the modern girl "may have a good time," frequent off duty hours and much less responsibility than any trained nurse knows to be possible. Such articles convey the idea that the sole aim of the average adolescent is for a soft job in which the material pleasures of the times can be enjoyed without ceasing. Also that such aims can be realised in the nursing profession. Neither of these ideas are true. The real spirit of the calling is not the love of selfish pleasure but lies in self-forgetfulness. Nor is the normal young woman ego-centric. I believe that suffering and weariness and all the innumerable tragedies that find their way into our hospitals still appeal to woman. I do not believe that one woman in a thousand is altogether untouched by another's sorrows. Therefore I deny that the main object of the average young woman is to amuse herself in this, or any other, generation.

While bearing in mind that the social and economic conditions of the whole nursing profession could and undeniably ought to be improved, we must not lose sight of its spiritual aspect. No material or even intellectual advancement must be allowed to shake our grasp from fundamentals. However material conditions progress the spirit of the calling must remain the same. No nurse can enter upon her work with self-seeking motives, and find in it that special joy which is the reward of service. And it is necessary to suffer in order to abolish suffering. That is an old truth from which no man can escape. But who taketh away the joy that is set before us?

HILARY H. RIGGALL.

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