Mr. Wyon concluded with a remark attributed to Lady Godiva, "With a certain sense of relief I approach my close."

THE DRAMA.

Miss Vera Beringer said a wise woman had been defined as "one who had a great deal to say and remained silent," but said she was unable to follow that advice and hoped she might be allowed to say what a pleasure it was to be present at this dinner, with so extremely decorative a feminine assembly, and attended by so many interesting and distinguished members of the opposite sex. As a recently bereaved Irishwoman once said when condoled with on the loss of her husband, "Ach, sure, Miss, darlint, it's a lonesome washing without a man's shirt in it."

Miss Beringer wondered how she dare get up and talk to nurses who were always face to face with tragedy and comedy and farce with the gloves off, and she could imagine that the patients might supply excellent material for the parts. Nurses saw the whole human story from the rise to the fall of the curtain without cuts, uncensored; they saw humanity stark, bare, in all its ugliness, in all its beauty. She had, she said, faith in humanity, a strong belief in her fellow men, that human nature was the finest thing in the world, though we might be up against it now and again.

"Everyone is as God made them and very often worse." What was the actor's theatre compared with the nurses? Miss Beringer said that both the drama and the nursing profession were great professions and great arts. The theatre could be one of the most powerful influences in the world. Some great man said that ideals in public life were unnecessary, surely he was wrong. Miss Beringer recalled that once when her "turn" followed some performing dogs and she was reciting "The Lascar," she heard a small boy in the audience say to his mother, "Mummie, mummie, do send her away and let the dogs come back." She said she would take no chances that evening and her woman's last words would be—

"It's a mighty good life this life of the stage when even the worst is said.
There's a sigh and a tear, a smile and a cheer, and you work with your heart and your head.
There's loss and there's gain,
There's pleasure and pain,
There's hunger and maybe some fall;
But still I declare, foul weather or fair,
It's a mighty good life after all."

LITERATURE.

Mrs. Baillie Reynolds deprecated the responsibility of speaking for literature, but claimed that she had been assured that her books had one attribute, they could be safely left about by the present generation for their grandmothers to read.

Civilization, she continued, had of late been retrogressive; the waves had drawn back and would return with renewed force, but the tide has not yet turned. In regard to literature she considered that in the present age there were no great men. It was the age of small, beautifully executed things (even Wells and Bernard Shaw were not great, only devastatingly clever), and she thought that this was because we had no high ideals. The rank and file did not read Shakespeare; were not interested in great things. Life was an everlasting struggle between good and bad, and the war had thrown our standards of morality and culture into the melting pot.

We were changing and were now at a new stage. If proof were needed, she said, take down from your shelf a bundle of old plays; they were such that an audience of to-day would not sit through. We had travelled far since the days of the old plays. In spite of this the Victorian age gave us a race of giants, but the age had passed; the beauty of the early summer had gone, yet we knew that one day we should be surprised by the golden harvest. Some great figure would break upon us; let us pray that we shall be ready when it comes and that we shall not let it perish for lack of appreciation.

Mrs. Baillie Reynolds concluded by expressing her warm thanks to the President and Council of the British College of Nurses for the delightful opportunity of meeting old and new friends at the dinner that evening.

SUCCESS TO THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

Dr. Bedford Fenwick in rising to propose "Success to the British College of Nurses" regretted that he could not, like Miss Macdonald, take the company back to the Olympian gods, he could only go back to "the dark and despairing days" of forty years ago in the nursing world.

Then nurses had no union, no power of complaint and no protection; they were extremely overworked and very badly paid, and fed and housed.

The nursing conditions for the sick were even worse, because every hospital taught its nurses what it chose, little or much, and the nurses had to learn their work actually by practising upon their patients.

Any woman could call herself a nurse, and even if destitute of knowledge and character could put on a uniform and obtain work in that capacity, to the active danger, and certainly the discomfort of the sick.

The Select Committee of the House of Lords, held in 1891-1893 marked the starting point for improvement, and the British Nurses Association, which he and Mrs. Fenwick had started in 1887, and which, from the intense opposition to it, had previously appeared to be hopeless, obtained at once a great lever for its future work, because their Lordships listened most courteously to the evidence placed before them by promoters for organisation of the nursing profession, and made recommendations, which hospitals all over the country were compelled sooner or later to adopt, and which led to the immense improvements which have since been effected in hospital conditions generally.

He had been asked to propose "Success to the British College of Nurses." The College was founded four years ago by an old and most generous friend of his, to put the coping-stone and crown to the great reform work which for thirty-two years Mrs. Fenwick and he, with a few determined helpers, had carried out, till the Nursing Acts were passed by Parliament in 1919, providing for the State Examination and Registration of Nurses. Every one present would admit that things had greatly improved since then. But further reforms and improvements in the education and efficiency of Nurses were still needed, and these the College was engaged in carrying out. They had a Capital Endowment of £100,000; they had an income this year of more than £7,000; they had invested, in the last three years, more than £5,000 to form pensions for nurses in old age and adversity. They spent nearly £1,000 a year on educational work, such as giving lectures and coaching classes in special subjects to nurses who required such advantages. They gave benevolent grants to nurses in sickness or adversity; they gave grants of very substantial amounts to Fellows and Members who desired to obtain training for the Certificate of the Central Midwives Board, or training as sister tutors, and grants to enable nurses to attend congresses in foreign countries, and so learn the most modern methods of nursing work. And the benefit of this did not cease with those who attended these meetings, because on their return, they were expected to make careful reports of all they had seen and heard, and these reports were published in the British Journal of Nursing and so were made known to nurses all over the world. It was obvious that this knowledge increased nursing efficiency, and was most beneficial to the sick of all classes in every part of the world where such nurses worked.

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