

Minnie was nine years old, when she organised her great game of Horatius: founded on Macaulay's Lay of the great Roman hero, and very freely dramatised to suit the requirements of Miss Elton's pupils.

Some kindly influence had impressed Minnie at this time with the nobility of sacrifice and when the personnel of the poem was distributed, the autocrat of nursery drama refused the principal character and decreed that her younger sister should represent "Horatius."

Minnie herself was "Herminius" and the favourite cousin "Lartius."

The intimate adherents of "Herminius," who in spirit and fact was always the principal hero, were all Romans, and as such rallied round their inspiring genius, ready to declare valiantly at his prompting: "How can man die better, than by facing fearful odds for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods."

Non intimates were nominated "Etruscans." As most of them had never heard of Macaulay, nor of Etruria, they made no objections.

"Horatius" was at once set to memorise the "Lay of Ancient Rome," referring to the time, when he "Kept the bridge in the brave days of old."

To this day his unworthy representative remembers being put on fatigue-duty, and doing the equivalent of hard labour, for the honour of the game. "Lartius" and most of the Romans obediently followed lead, and it speaks well for Minnie's early power of disciplining her subordinates, that there was no rebellion in the land.

Up and down Highgate Rise roamed gallant Romans and Etruscans.

Many a battle was fought and hard knocks taken and given, unknown to the Gracious Queen and her Parliament, who governed our land, when in 1867 a pretty little girl of nine invoked the shades of the past and made them very real to herself and her followers.

Many a time the "Fathers of the City" assembled in the nursery on rainy days, to discuss the fate of Rome, and "Horatius" was called upon to stand forth and recite: "Hew down the bridge Sir Consul, with all the speed you may, I, with two more to help me, will keep the foe in play."

And then to see the brave "Spurius Lartius" spring forward to claim the right-hand place of honour with fiery enthusiasm, that carried all before it—and to note the noble "Herminius"—yielding to others the place of preference, bravely and simply respond: "I will abide on thy left side and keep the bridge with thee."

More than half a century passed, when I again heard Minnie quote words of courage from Macaulay's Lay.

She had played the great game for many years, and had not shirked the wounds and the weariness.

Well and faithfully had she "kept the bridge," and the victory was at hand.

*(To be continued.)*

#### THE NURSING PROFESSION (WAGES AND HOURS) BILL.

Parliament has now risen for the Easter vacation and though the Nursing Profession (Wages and Hours) Bill introduced by Mr. A. Fenner Brockway, Member for Leyton, has several times been put down in the Orders of the Day for Second Reading it has been opposed on each occasion, and, as a private member's Bill, moved after 11 p.m., the motion could not be considered. Vigilance, however, must not be relaxed, and the time before Parliament reassembles may well be used by Registered Nurses in writing to their members of Parliament and in instructing the public as to the effect of the Bill. The strong opposition on the part of patients, doctors, and nurses (particularly nurses) should certainly be reflected in the House of Commons.

#### A SURVEY OF DISTRICT NURSING.

Under the authority of the London County Council a survey of District Nursing in the Administrative County of London has been published, prepared by Dr. Margaret Hogarth and submitted to the Council by the County Medical Officer of Health.

##### Arrangements for Domiciliary Nursing.

In London the domiciliary nursing of the sick is undertaken by district nurses employed by:

(1) District Nursing Associations (a) affiliated to the Queen's Institute, (b) Independent District Nursing Associations; (2) Ranyard Nurses—the Nursing Branch of the Ranyard Mission, and by (3) a few parish nurses.

The conclusions arrived at by Dr. Hogarth are as follows:

##### General Conclusions.

The further I investigated the domiciliary nursing of London, the more I was impressed with the tremendous amount of individual and collective voluntary effort expended in securing for the poorer classes a free nursing service of the highest quality obtainable. This service is never denied to anyone who cannot pay for the services of a private nurse. It covers the whole of London. Since this survey was begun steps have been taken to instal a nurse in the one uncovered district. The standard of nursing is high and is maintained at a consistently high level. The qualifications of the nurses employed are the best obtainable in the nursing profession, so that there is no difference in the quality of nursing at the disposal of the poor and of those who are in a position to pay for the services of a private nurse, except that the nurse has to do more for a patient where not only the comforts but the actual necessities of life are hard to procure.

One outstanding feature of this service is the educational value of each nursing visit to the home. Such a visit is not a visit simply to give advice on general hygiene, it is the practical application of an immense amount of theoretical teaching, possibly familiar to the patient but never before applied as an ordinary routine. A district nurse's visit to a tuberculous patient is illuminating. She sees to the comfort of the patient, the disposal of the bed, the collection and disposal of the sputum, the care of the crockery and the food. Everything is made simple and easy and at every visit the education of the family proceeds. A nurse's influence permeates a whole neighbourhood and her opinion is respected in proportion to her immense practical value. From what I have seen of the work of these nurses in the homes, I do not consider that the educational and preventive effect of a nursing visit can be over-estimated. In this connection I am of opinion that for any domiciliary nursing of patients under the new arrangements the services of these nursing organisations should be retained and that a district nurse should be present at each medical session at district offices or dispensaries.

The maintenance of the present high standard of domiciliary nursing is due in no small measure to the type of women to be found at the head of the large body of district nurses employed—the superintendents of district nursing associations, and the supervising sisters of the Ranyard Nurses, all women of the highest standing in their profession, with a tradition of work and service which they pass on to the nurses under them. The altruistic attitude of the district nurse who remains at the work for any length of time is strikingly apparent. For her the work, distasteful and revolting in some of its aspects, becomes more a vocation than a profession, and for this reason alone it is important that her devotion should not be exploited even in the interests of the general public.

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