

Objectionable presumably meaning the claim to self-determination in professional affairs, which this JOURNAL has always advocated.

"Some day you will have an unpleasant awakening, when the worm turns," we replied.

Well, the worm has turned, and it rests with the proletariat to prove that their demands are justifiable, that their claims are just, and that their methods of reform are wise and beneficial not only to themselves but to the community at large.

In this connection we have no sympathy with extreme methods, such as parading in masks the while attempting to enlist the sympathy of the public with grievances, because all such demands should be faced with courage. Neither is it wise for isolated groups of nurses to go on strike, as a group of nurses at the London Homœopathic Hospital recently did, walking off duty for thirty-six hours, when their quarrel was with individuals, and not with the regulations of service.

These isolated protests lead nowhere. The time is long overdue, however, for hospital employers and others to encourage a self-respecting sense of responsibility upon the part of the nursing staff, including the matron, who is often ignored, to co-operate in approving the system of duty they are called upon to perform and of the conditions of service to which they have to conform.

Needless to say, the claim for a less conventional life is being urgently demanded by women of all classes. How to guide this free spirit is no easy task, at home or abroad, and hospital committees, medical superintendents and matrons must realise that we are face to face with the greatest revolution in social conditions since the dissolution of the monasteries.

A statement in the London evening press that the members of a municipal town council, to meet the shortage of nurses, had decided to "employ girls from Denmark, Sweden and Finland in hospitals and institutions for the nursing of which they were responsible," naturally aroused a sense of grievance in the minds of many nurses. With us they agreed that British nurses must be forthcoming to care for their fellows.

We therefore questioned a matron in the district concerned and found three black crows chattering as of yore. It would appear that one Finnish Nurse thoroughly trained in England and a British subject, known to a member of the staff was anxious for experience in an English hospital—the Town Council agreed—a permit had been asked for, but not yet granted, and so the 150 nurses required were not to be requisitioned from abroad. Thus the three crows flew away!

But the sad fact remains that the public authority in the town referred to needs 150 nurses, and the matrons of the hospitals are unable to recruit them. This town is not in a singular plight; we are informed that many matrons are distracted for need of suitable staff, that indeed for training in some of our leading nursing schools probationers are not forthcoming, although conditions of life and service are organised on a liberal scale.

This, then, brings us to very serious consideration of the subject, and we must not assume that it can be lightly dismissed. The well springs of this question go deep. We can recall vividly the evolution of the

nursing profession for the past 60 years. What do we find?

We find that "the people" are here, not in their former state of slavish dependence, but claiming equality in the body politic, and like so many emancipated creatures intolerant of restrictions.

"I have only one life and I mean to live it in the light. My dad worked in the pit in darkness at the age of eight," a young girl told us recently.

And long hours service in a sick ward, every hour necessarily spent under tutelage, arouses a sense of fear in the minds of the newly emancipated girl, who now that she is comparatively free, means to have her fling. Generations of inhibition inspires the instinctive dread of control.

One of the most successful matrons we know has acquainted herself with the family history of each probationer for three generations past. She knows their idiosyncrasies.

This scare of recruiting nurses from Scandinavia may bear fruit and make us realise how inferior in comparison is the education of girls in England to that of their Scandinavian sisters, some of the former can neither write legibly, spell correctly nor speak a foreign tongue.

The London County Council is being recommended to conduct an experiment at Hammersmith House, the Nurses' Home which is being built at Hammersmith Hospital.

It is proposed that the administration of the home should be placed on a basis comparable with that of students' hostels, with a warden and a nurses' committee to deal with staff welfare and social activities.

Fourteen Council nurses' homes are to have modernised equipment at a cost of £10,000.

THE RESIGNATION OF MISS DORSEY.

The resignation of Miss Nan Dorsey, the Warden of Florence Nightingale International House, the residence of the Florence Nightingale International Foundation Students, in London, will be very sincerely regretted by everyone who has had the advantage and pleasure of working with her and realising her able and devoted service in the cause of international good will throughout the nursing world.

We express from personal experience of her work for a number of years our admiration for her sense of duty.

Miss Dorsey has welcomed students from all over the world, for many years made them feel at home in London, encouraged a fine spirit of comradeship amongst them, and is generally beloved.

Her resignation, which takes place at the end of the year, is a real loss to the Foundation.

Miss Dorsey is returning to the United States of America, and is, we believe, to be succeeded in office by an English woman, whose duties will be of a somewhat different character.

We are of opinion that to be truly international in spirit the Florence Nightingale Foundation would do well to include other than British women on its staff.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)