

attracted to the profession . . . When training is complete, higher salaries are desirable."

#### THE GRIEVANCES AND REMEDIES.

Dr. Harold Balme, author of "A Criticism of Nursing Education," writes: "There is no question whatever that the nursing situation is becoming more and more acute. When we hear of the L.C.C. shutting down wards because of the shortage of nurses; of country hospitals and sanatoria having to depend, in many instances, on the services of untrained assistants; of head mistresses advising their girls not to take up nursing as a profession; and of well-educated girls declining to enter the training schools, or, worse still, entering and dropping out within the first year, in spite of the great demand and opportunity for trained nurses of high intelligence and scientific training."

In Dr. Balme's opinion, "nursing as we see it to-day requires three different types of recruit. Women of the highest intellectual attainment and training to take up work which awaits them in hospital administration, modern hospital practice, public health services, infant and child welfare, and in sociological reform, and for this purpose high educational standards of specialised instruction are essential.

"In the second place there is an ever increasing demand for the good rank-and-file nurse who needs to be trained on sound clinical lines (*clinical*, not theoretical), for the important work she has to perform. Lastly, there is a growing place for well-trained domestic workers, who should not be allowed to call themselves nurses, or to practise as such, but who should be trained to take over many duties of a domestic character, which are at present carried out by the overworked nurse in the hospital ward."

Dr. Balme outlines training for each group, but alas! he does not tell us by what means "hitum, titum, and scrub," are to be restrained in their appropriate environment! Dr. Balme calls for "a full measure of Government financial aid. It is for the Ministry of Health to act."

#### AN EMPHATIC EDITORIAL "NO."

On February 5th, the Editor summed up the three articles, and in reply to the question "Do Nurses get a Square Deal?" answered emphatically "No!"

"The corollary to that 'No' is clear. The effect of not giving a square deal to nurses is seriously to endanger the lives of their patients, of ourselves, the general public, . . . public bodies are now being forced to shut down wards, because of the shortage of nursing recruits, and this at a time when everyone who knows anything about our great hospitals knows that people suffering from dangerous diseases are often kept on the waiting list for months. . . . If a sweeping epidemic like that of 1918-19 were to return, or if a war were to break out, thousands would die unnecessarily, simply from lack of skilled nursing.

"All three writers have agreed with the best informed public opinion that the shortage is acute. All three have agreed that the conditions under which nurses work are unsatisfactory and largely account for the shortage. . . . All three have agreed that the nursing hours are too long. . . . It is when they come to the remedies and safeguards that the writers of the articles differ.

#### The Failure of the College of Nursing.

"What has happened seems to us to be clear enough. As it has been very truly put, the young women of this country have gone on strike. That the strike has been neither conscious nor organised makes no difference. This dumb, unorganised, unconscious but appallingly effective strike is just as serious a menace to our lives as if it were organised, concerted and deliberate; it is taking place (a) amongst the young women of the general public and (b) amongst the probationers. It is therefore largely

from the probationers, backed by the public, that the remedy must come. The College of Nursing, founded in 1916 by Doctors and Matrons has failed, on its own showing. By its own words it stands convicted. It was started close on twenty-two years ago 'to attract the best type of women into nursing and to improve the nursing profession economically, educationally and socially . . . At the end of twenty years, the position of the nurses, economically, educationally and socially, is so bad that we are facing a crisis of the gravest nature.

"The reason for the failure of the College is clear. A large proportion of its officers are not rank-and-file nurses, but the employers of nurses. Human nature being what it is, an organisation ruled by employers is unlikely to secure adequate pay or good conditions for a body of employees."

#### The Gods Help Those.

"The lesson to be deduced is the old one—the almost invariable one. The gods—and other authorities—help those who help themselves. The only people who can directly help the nurses are the nurses themselves. It may not be easy for the nurses to take action, for they are trained to be subservient—to be unenterprising, to show no initiative or independence. . . . Already a hopeful start has been made by a group of nurses and probationers in one of the largest London hospitals. Less than six months ago the group formed a new organisation, The Association of Nurses. It has already made a surprising amount of progress. If the leadership of the Association continues to act as wisely as it has up to now, if nurses and probationers continue to join it at the present rate, the Association should in a very short time revolutionise nursing conditions and put an end to the present stay-out strike amongst probationers and potential probationers, and to the danger to life and health which this strike involves for the nation."

The Editor calls for courage and reminds nurses of their public duty as citizens.

The public-spirited action of *Time and Tide* commands respect whether we agree with its deductions or not. We have realised for years the difficulty in gaining publicity in the press for the need of nursing reforms.

#### NURSING CONDITIONS IN U.S.A.

*The Bulletin*, issued periodically by the American Nurses' Association, reports replies to enquiries *re* the present staff nursing situation from directors of nursing services:

*From the West.*—"Desirable students could be interested in nursing by generally raising the status of the graduate nurse, improving her working conditions, hours of service, etc. I find my applicants very practical. They seem to want to be assured what they are going to get out of nursing as well as what they will be expected to contribute to nursing."

*From the Middle West.*—"We have had difficulty in securing enough graduate nurses for general duty. However, since we raised salaries to \$70.00 a month, plus full maintenance, and instituted a six-day 48-hour week for graduate nurses, we have had much less difficulty."

*From the East.*—"We experienced great difficulty in securing qualified graduate nurses until July, 1937, at which time we went on the eight-hour day and increased salaries. Since that time we have had no difficulty."

*From the South.*—"No difficulty in securing qualified graduate staff nurses. Always have a waiting list. Pleasant work and living conditions."

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