

OUR YOUNG PRINCESSES & WAR CONDITIONS.

The King and Queen are wisely permitting the young Princesses to come into touch with war conditions. For the first time the activities at an R.A.F. station have been visited, and the controls and bomb sights explained to them. Afterwards, the Princesses saw a pilot being tested in a link trainer. They watched the course "flown" by the pilot as it appeared on the plotting table, and each in turn listened through headphones to the pilot's messages.

The King and Queen, with the Princesses, made a tour of the station, and afterwards had tea in the officers' mess.

PEOPLE WHO PASS IN THE LIGHT.

THE STORY OF "THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING."

In our December number we acknowledged the reception of "The Story of the American Journal of Nursing," for the Library of the British College of Nurses, with the compliments of *The American Journal of Nursing*, and promised our readers a review of The Story, an illustrated pamphlet of 26 pages.

As we studied the remarkable history of *The American Journal*, without doubt the most comprehensive Journal of Nursing in the world, we were uplifted with thankfulness that the sense of professional responsibility which inspired it has reaped such a rich reward.

PEOPLE WHO PASS IN THE LIGHT.

"LITTLE ROBINA."

And then brilliantly illuminated memory flashed retrospectively to the tragic scene, which called forth the first free organ in the Nursing Press, close on half a century ago, *The Nursing Record*, now THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

The British Nurses' Association had been founded in 1887, when professional nursing was in its infancy, and the medical profession, with few exceptions, and employers of nurses generally, were not in sympathy with the free evolution of a class of subordinate women workers, and it soon became apparent that the medical men who associated themselves with the demand for organisation by trained nurses, including their claim for legal status, were dubious indeed!

The friction between the medical and nursing elements on policy, and in Committees became acute, and the more reactionary of the former did not hesitate to use methods of intimidation, actively supported week by week by the trade nursing press. Thus we come to an occasion which we claim gave birth to the justifiable demand by the nurses for a free organ in the press, owned and controlled by professional nurses themselves; a right which, in the past forty years, nurses all over the world have secured.

The first claim to this freedom of spirit, a landmark in nursing history, was a British demand and should be known to all those nurses throughout the world who enjoy the privilege of controlling their own official organ.

AN EPOCH-MAKING MEETING.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association had been summoned.

The stalwarts were present, with an eminent medical Knight in the Chair.

Our first and much esteemed Secretary, Miss Daisy Robins ("Little Robina" to her friends), read the Minutes and when signed the Chairman stated aggressively:—

"I wish to report to the Committee the gross insubordination of the Secretary, in refusing to summon a meeting and bring the Minute book, as directed by me, to be held at my private house, of certain members of this Committee, to discuss matters of importance, her excuse being that she was not authorised to summon selected members of the Committee to meet in private houses to discuss the business of the Association, nor to submit the Minute Books to unauthorised meetings. Such insubordination upon the part of the Secretary is most reprehensible, and I feel sure the Committee will support my demand for an apology."

I glanced at the victim of this attack, she stood upright, but her face pale as death. Filled with that cold implacable anger which sweeps all before it I rose to my feet, I claimed that our Secretary had fearlessly done her duty, and owed no apology.

A medical chorus opposite shouted, "Shame, shame."

"Shame, indeed," I retorted, "but it is all on your side of the table."

"Little Robina" was by now swaying on her feet. I took her arm and guided her from the room, tapping a friend on the shoulder to follow us, which he did. A severe heart seizure followed.

"My God!" exclaimed our friend, "if she dies on our hands, what a scandal!"

With restoratives and rest, the poor girl recovered. Later she was taken home. Resignation soon followed, and later death from extensive heart disease.

The scene was seared in the cells of memory for all time.

Later, as we left the Meeting together, Isla Stewart asked, "And what now?" "First and foremost," I replied, "A free organ in the press, nothing but publicity can save us." And so it came about. Messrs. Sampson, Low and Marston, owned the *Nursing Record* at that time. This firm had generously supported self-government for nurses, but finding the employers' press squeezing them out of the advertising world, were willing to sell. We acquired the journal of which I have been Editor for close on half-a-century. Behold the 88 bound volumes, "He who runs may read."

Without our organ in the press it is unlikely that State Registration would have been accomplished in the United Kingdom without many restrictions. The inspiring history of the National and International Associations of Nurses might not have united the nurses of the world—nor their inspiration been recorded.

Do not let us forget the courage of "Little Robina" as she passed in the Light, and let us remember no good is ever cast away, it is caught by invisible forces and carried afar.

Next month we shall refer to "The Story of the American Journal of Nursing" in the hope that its well-deserved methods of success may be followed in this country. It is not only the business faculty of the American nurses which has placed their *Journal* in the front rank, but their loyalty to one another.

E. G. F.

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