

No independent, self-respecting person, who wishes to build up his or her career and who does not mind a little hardship in the early days, wishes to be, in any way, associated with the Ministry of Labour. It savours of "unemployment," and the "means test" and "unskilled" trades and workers; and no amount of veneer, with which this Ministry may cover itself, will add one iota to its glamour. The Nursing Profession and the Ministry of Labour are totally incompatible and a divorce must be quickly made absolute.

One other reason for the necessity of this divorce is that very little permanent good has ever resulted from the direction of Nurses. Many candidates who have been "directed" into hospitals, have been totally unsuitable and unstable and have not even desired to become Nurses. They have left their jobs without permission, and the Ministry of Labour either could not, or would not, "direct" them back again. What a ghastly waste of money, and precious time, and what a farce! No need to wonder *why* we have to pay such heavy income-tax; and how galling to think of so much waste of money.

Lastly—the paradox of "the Freedom of Service" ought to be fully understood and practised once again. We are taught from childhood that it is more blessed to give than to receive; but alas, to-day, the reverse is openly preached, and it is now more blessed to receive than to give. We hear on all sides to-day—"Give me this"—"Give me that"—"Give me power"—"Give me lives to control"! Give, Give, Give, is now a hollow echo, reverberating on all sides! Examples of self-control by disciplined Seniors are simply wasted; and a period of re-education in Spiritual values needs to begin, in order to save our civilisation.

The Nursing Profession, whose ideals emanate from the mists of antiquity and Christianity could play a leading part in this policy of re-education. Given its freedom to choose its own Students and Novices, and to teach and disseminate its own ideals and loyalties; it would no doubt be glad to do so. It is a very uplifting thought, and one in which we may truly take pride, that there are yet amongst us, in these days of dwindling moral values, women of truly great Christian virtues and character, who are still sufficiently "old-fashioned" to believe those great truths of a Wonderful Leader, who lived and died nearly 2,000 years ago, and who said—"Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto Me." And so, for love of Him, and the promised reward, they continue to nurse and nourish the least of these brethren, and they do it in spite of "controls"; in spite of endless provocations; in spite of others reaping the earthly honours and reward; and in spite of all shortages and curtailment of personal liberties. May their martyrdom be short; may controls quickly go, and may God Bless all Nurses and give them freedom in which to carry on their truly noble work.

"BREAD AND MARG."

We beg to acknowledge, with very sincere pleasure, the following generous gifts for the old Sister whose circumstances, after a life of strenuous devotion to the sick, are so pathetic: Miss A. Henderson, 10s.; Miss A. E. Schuller, £1; Miss A. Urquhart, 10s. 6d.

RELIGHTING THE LAMP.

By D. J. GUNSTON.

This month marks the anniversary of the death of the pioneer of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale. She died on August 13, 1910. To many people it may seem a far cry back to those days, but it is a fact that before her work there was no organised nursing service in this country, either for civilians or military casualties. The care of the sick was in the hands of such odious characters as Dickens so admirably portrays in the person of Sairey Gamp—cruelly incompetent, untrained, negligent and often half-drunk.

Florence Nightingale was always devoted to the alleviation of suffering right from her early childhood. When she was 21 she studied abroad and visited hospitals and institutions all over Europe. On her return to England she devoted ten years to concentrated study of nursing in all its aspects, and then offered herself to the Government as a volunteer to go out to relieve the conditions among the soldiers engaged in the newly-started Crimean War. Taking a number of similarly-minded women with her she set out on the long and arduous journey to Russia. On her arrival she spent all her time improving the conditions under which the men were suffering. For two years she laboured unceasingly easing the lot of the terrible casualties that resulted from the fighting. The sanitary conditions in the camp-hospitals were appalling and she did all she—a mere woman—could to improve them. It was her custom to walk round the wards at night with a lamp in her hand tending and comforting the long lines of wounded men that earned her the title of "The Lady of the Lamp." That was what the soldiers called her—the first night nurse.

She stayed until the last British soldier had been evacuated from the Crimea in 1856, but her own health had broken down under the strain. She came home to remain an invalid for the rest of her life, but even that did not stop her work. She wrote many reports and pamphlets drawing public attention to the many improvements needed in medical treatment at that time. Her volume, "Notes on Nursing" was for many years the standby in Victorian households.

The example she gave imparted a new significance to the care of the sick. It inspired it to a new impetus—a new spirit of honourable service—one which I think would be well worth recapturing to-day. Through the passing of many years and with them changes in social conditions, the profession, while retaining utmost loyalty and devotion to service within itself, has nevertheless become less dignified in the public eye. Recently, in fact, nursing has been called "the Cinderella of careers for girls." This is misleading to the general public for it bears no relation to the facts. Girls and their parents have come to look upon nursing as a vocation of mere drudgery and little beside, not the noble occupation it really is. This undeniable fact is in part responsible for the acute shortage of nurses to-day. It has taken a war to make the country realise this, because wars make casualties and increase diseases. But nursing is as vitally important a job in peace as in war. The health of the country after the war must form the basis for all our schemes of planning, and the

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