

arise, let the "Sister" tell them *slowly* the story of Christ feeding yonder hungry multitude—or something of the kind—and let her own example and demeanour towards them be an exemplification of the moral, and the key to the hearts and affections of the suffering poor lieth in her own keeping from that self-same hour.

Some District Nurses have gone in and out of the homes of the poor, done themselves what was deemed expedient, and then rushed off again, leaving the people as wise as they were before. Others, I have observed, have usually made a point of (wherever practicable) modestly taking some friend or relative upstairs with them; thereby, like good Head Nurses, training them into the habit of lending a helping hand in time of need. Which, think you, is the better way? Personally, I would commend the latter plan; for the oppressed, down-trodden, and ignorant amongst them want coaching, and this important truth should be always borne in mind. And, as opportunity offers, one might, peradventure, be able to inculcate a few of the elementary principles of frugality, industry, and thrift; and note and commend any efforts made in that direction. This training would inspire them with a faith in themselves; and, in addition to setting the District Nurses somewhat more free to take up aggressive work, would also be the means of meanwhile—all unconsciously, it might be—training the people to become valuable assistants, and to become self-helpful and self-reliant in due course. Then why should not the District Nurses be developing into *true* "Missionaries of Health"? Let no "Visiting" Sister despise these suggestions, as attention thereunto will ultimately place her in the front ranks of the District Nursing volunteers.

It has been said that "The man who has never suffered in his heart knows nothing of real work for Christ." The battle between the Prince of this World and the Prince of Peace is still raging, on behalf of the town of Mansoul, and undoubtedly it will prove to be a very fierce and long one. I repeat, an ounce of sterling example would be worth more to our poor, frail, suffering humanity than all the precepts in the world. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

In conclusion, after going in and out amongst the sick poor for a quarter of a century, I have no hesitation in most emphatically asserting that no other workers amongst them could to-day find so many commanding opportunities of getting at, winning and training these people, as the properly consecrated, the unsectarian, and the "true" District Nurse. And, in view of this fact, it is passing strange that this very responsible and hard-working body of women should not have been better housed long ago.

James Platt says, in his book on Life, "The life of the future needs to be a life lived with a good object; and the minds of all educated to note and grasp the beauties of creation, to know the names of the flowers in the field, the birds that people the air and woods, trained to read that wondrous cosmos, and trace therein in every detail the presence of its Divine Creator, so as to gather content from the varied beauties of God's fair world, guided by the teachings of the intellect, under the direction of the conscience, thus giving to the common things of life a beauty beyond mere surface thought, and make us feel that life is a gift worth having, that life is worth living; seeing in the earth the garden of God, and feeling a childlike faith in His guidance, and a heartfelt devotion from contemplating the beauty of His works."

How much interest the lay public is taking in the great "District Nursing" movement, the following cutting is just one more of those tangible proofs which cannot be gainsaid. "Mr. Henry Tate, sugar refiner, of Liverpool and London, has offered £5,000 to each city, for the promotion of the home Nursing of the sick poor." And it is quite true that the vocation of the District Nurse is a gigantic and discouraging one, for the efficient discharge of which a very

thorough and *preparatory* "Home and Hospital" training is essential, great tact and knowledge of human nature, and love of the work; and only the *very best moral characters* should be chosen for it. CHARACTER is eternal. And if only by way of a spur to higher and nobler aims, those workers should have our warmest sympathies and prayers. Kindly peruse the extract accompanying, which sentiments I would cordially endorse, and you will, I believe, agree with me on this point.—Very faithfully yours, ONLY A PIONEER.

"THE CHILDREN OF POVERTY.—The children of ignorance and poverty are almost everywhere growing up as such, and as such will be bequeathed to the State to deal with as it best may. Upon this class our educational means are producing small impression. The great mass of them being themselves uneducated, have no adequate feeling of the value of instruction, and their great aim seems to be to convert their children into a source of profit, as soon and as largely as possible. The school is evaded, that the merest pittance may be gained from the field or the factory. Let these grossly untaught multitudes come to be only in a slight degree more formidable than at present; and let any strong blight come upon our means of subsistence, or upon our means of employment, and to the hunger-bitten millions of Ireland we may have to add an equal number in the same state of wretchedness in England; and before such an insurgency the power of the strongest Government may be as nothing, and, in an hour when we think not, a wound may be inflicted on our national greatness from which recovery will be impossible. To pursue our present course is to end thus—to perish, as all great empires before us have perished, our ignorance and our vices having become stronger than our knowledge and our virtues. Here, then, is the evil—an evil which must be subdued, or it will assuredly subdue us. This accumulating ignorance—this lowness in all senses—we must vanquish, or be content to be vanquished by it. In what way, then, may we address ourselves, with the best prospect of success, to this great work of self-preservation, of patriotism, of humanity, and of religion?"

COMPETITIVE PRIZE ESSAY. EIGHTEENTH COMPETITION.

A Book of the value of One Guinea will be awarded for an Essay as under:—

"A Private Nurse—worn with work, but not finding it necessary to put herself under the Doctor's hands, yet strongly needing rest—is told by a kind friend of the patient she has recently been nursing to 'go for a change, and he will defray expenses up to the amount of a ten pound note.' How would the ten pounds be best spent? giving all particulars as to what could be done with such a sum under similar circumstances, recuperating the Nurse's strength being, of course, the first consideration."

RULES.

1.—Contributions must reach the Editor, at the office of THE NURSING RECORD, addressed as follows:—"Prize Essay Competition, THE NURSING RECORD, St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, London, E.C.," not later than Monday, August 11th, 1890.

2.—Manuscript must be written distinctly in ink and on one side of the paper only, upon not less than 24 nor more than 48 pages of ordinary-sized ruled sermon paper. The pages must be numbered and fastened together.

3.—The real and full name and address (stating whether Miss or Mrs.) of the Competitor must be inscribed on the back of each contribution, and notification of which Hospital or Institution the Competitor has been or is attached to.

4.—Trained Nurses or those personally associated with Nursing work only allowed to compete.

The decision of the Prize Essay Editor to be final, and any infringement of the above Rules will be considered a disqualification.

NOTICE.—The Prize Essay Editor will not undertake to return MSS. unless accompanied with a sufficiently stamped addressed envelope; and in no case will he be responsible for any loss of same during transmission, &c. In no case must manuscripts be rolled up when sent by post; they must be folded.

previous page

next page