

in some cases, to intensify the faults to which, in individual characters, it is apt occasionally to give rise, especially with regard to private work afterwards; and, on the other hand, too short a time in the wards often results in want of experience, particularly in the nursing of special cases.

In considering what constitutes an efficient nurse, from a nurse's point of view at any rate, hospital training of some duration is unquestionably a prime necessity, and, for those who in the future are to be in charge of wards, long residence in a hospital, no doubt, is essential.

Theoretically, an efficient nurse should be physically strong, and as regards mere mechanical work no doubt it is an advantage; but practically a nurse who does not herself know what illness means, or the misery highly strung nerves may cause, often unintentionally jars on her patient, and does not, therefore, feel for and with him, so as to rest mind and body, in the way a really efficient nurse should.

In painting an ideal nurse, therefore, muscular strength should be combined with a personal knowledge of illness, and nerves that are sensitive, but well under control. At least a rudimentary knowledge of physiology and anatomy, and of the laws of health, are necessary to make an efficient nurse.

For example, an intelligent appreciation of the benefits of ventilation, combined with extreme care in the prevention of draughts, is of untold value to her patients. And lives have been lost ere this, even in hospital life, from want of knowledge on the nurse's part as to where the large arteries are most superficial and easiest to compress.

Important tests of a nurse's efficiency are the skill and deftness with which she does all that is necessary whether in surgical or medical work, with the least possible outlay of strength, and the least possible pain for the patient; thoughtful care for his well-being in all ways; quickness in reading his wishes; tact and firmness in refusing what is bad for him; patient bearing of irritability and distrust. Among other qualifications are self-confidence, born of experience, and far removed from conceit; and conscientiousness, which is not morbid. Intelligent obedience, and ability to carry out not only the letter but the spirit of the doctor's orders; loyalty to him in word and in deed, and rapidity in grasping his meaning; firmness and dexterity of hand; unflinching watchfulness and care; absolute cleanliness in every detail and utensil; gentleness of touch, and quickness of eye; perfect truthfulness and accuracy in reporting on the patient's condition; infinite patience and unselfishness in all things; perfect self-control, calmness in emergencies, and an utter absence of all fussiness of manner; readiness of resource, and ability to make the best of any materials to be obtained; a willingness to turn her hand to anything which she cannot get

properly done by others, if it is necessary for her patient's comfort; adaptability in its fullest sense; a just appreciation of the risks to which her patient or herself are liable, untempered by fear, or the shadow of any selfish consideration; unflinching earnestness in trying to do her duty, and firm trust in help from above to enable her to carry out her work properly, however difficult or dangerous to her patient it may seem; above and beyond everything, always acting and striving to live up to the highest standard—all these things go to make up the sum of what constitutes an efficient nurse in its fullest meaning.

In addition, if her work lies in hospital she should possess a power of administration and of imparting knowledge; practically ruling and controlling others firmly and well, but by love and not by fear; tenderness in dealing with their faults; patience in bearing small worries; courage and tact in checking and restraining those about her when necessary; bearing humbly, often quite unmerited reproach; sympathizing with the difficulties of others, consciously and unconsciously influencing them for good.

Only nurses themselves know the difficulty of becoming in any degree efficient, in the sense of such an ideal as I have endeavoured to portray; but at least we can, one and all, hospital and private nurses alike, *do our very best*, and endeavour to realize in our own lives, and our own work, all the possibilities for good that lie open to us in our profession, thankful when we are enabled to help some life or alleviate suffering, and not despairing when our cases seem hopeless, or our patients are taken from us; remembering for our comfort that after we have conscientiously and carefully done our utmost the result rests in higher Hands than ours; bearing in mind always that a nurse's presence should bring with it a sense of calmness and of rest, and that she herself should be—

"Brave, but not fool-hardy; cheerful, but not frivolous; resolute, but not obstinate; gentle, but not effeminate; and faithful, even unto death."

### NURSING ECHOES.

\* \* \* *Communications (duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith) are specially invited for these columns.*

SEVERAL correspondents have asked me to give my opinion on the Nursing Strike—as the lay papers termed it—at Sheffield, but I have not done so till both sides of the story could be told. Now we have it all before us; Miss Corvan's letter in support of her sister having been reprinted in our last number. Impartially considered, therefore, the case stands thus. Miss Corvan was appointed to the charge of the Nursing Home in 1877; she then found that

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