

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine :
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine."

Yet it is certain that women entering upon this particular vocation, from motives similar to those that actuate others in other departments of life, do as a fact find therein a contentment more unmixed, if not greater, than that which attends other pursuits, including the Doctor's. It resides in the assured utility of their work; in the need for physical activity, the best of tonics for the body; in the sense of personal risk for the sake of others, which is not a bad tonic for the soul. Consider that the Nurse's work is, so to speak, *surer* than the Doctor's. There have been a thousand conflicting theories of healing, and there are conflicts about it still. But no one ever doubted the quality of the Nurse's art. The unmixed utility of a gentle hand and tactile tenderness, is not more certain to-day than it was at the time when our art of medicine was half superstition and half fraud. Even now no Doctor can enjoy that assurance of the pure good of his work which the Nurse never loses.

And besides the assurance that the work is good, there is this extra advantage, which Nurses and Doctors share together, in seeing the end of their labour. The Nurse's profession is often compared with that of the teacher, and women entering upon life often hesitate between the two. But the governess, unlike the Nurse, habitually loses sight of her charge just at the supreme moment when mind and character are developing. It is true, indeed, that the Nurse's prospect in awaiting the future is not wholly pleasurable. In lingering and incurable illness, in its petulance, impatience, and vain search for ease; in that restlessness with which every Nurse is familiar, and which no contrivance can relieve; in the sight of suffering that is hopeless, endless, even thankless, there is such trial for the Nurse as perhaps Doctors alone can appreciate. But this is not all or half of the Nurse's lot: it only tempers and sober the rest. Nurses and Doctors, too, know of the ready gratitude of those they tend, of the excitement of watching acute illness and awaiting its crisis, of the pleasure of seeing bad symptoms yield to good remedies, near danger averted, even life saved.

If you would understand at a glance the source whence the Nurse derives her contentment, you may find it any day in the Hospital Ward. There is the working-man put in the way of recovery from some accident of his trade by the aid of skilled nursing no less than of the Surgeon's art; the sick child recovering from some fever which the poverty and noise of home would have aggravated; the profligate and the vicious, softened by illness and sympathy, with a new light of hope on

their faces; even the helpless and the dying tenderly watched and spared some of the pains of death. Such observation of the Nurse's sphere is not to be considered in the abstract; you must compare it with other fields of labour or of pleasure—with teaching, with apprenticeship to literature, with the pursuit of art or science, with the desperate attempts of the unoccupied to keep themselves amused—and upon such comparison you must strike the balance.

My speech to-night, as I have said, has regard to but one side of the subject: the duty of the Nurse to the Doctor, the responsibilities, the dignity, and the rewards of Nursing. What the Nurse has to say of the Doctor we have yet to learn. Nor is it to be forgotten that, while the duties and obligations of Nurses and Doctors are reciprocal, they owe a common allegiance to those they tend. Never more than now, when the arts of advertising are so various, the craving for notoriety so keen, the business of prying into each other's concerns so distinct and successful a branch of journalism—never more than now are we to keep in mind the sacredness of our common trust—sacred in the willing sacrifice of self, in the guardianship of our colleagues' honour and good fame no less than of our own, in the confidences so fully reposed in us. Never more than now should we study to be quiet and to do our own business, without clamour or ostentation, in that restful and unenvying spirit which has been the aim throughout of this Nurses' Association.

Here, then, I would pause, since to go farther would be to over-step the borders of my own experience, and possibly to go astray. But, without knowing, I can well believe that there are further sources of pleasure awaiting Nurses in their intercourse with each other, and the habit they have acquired of thinking of others, and aiming at pleasure, not directly, but in the rebound. I imagine that with them such depressing passions as envy and jealousy are unknown, that their criticisms are always kindly, and their conversation never degrades into gossip. Only, having no actual knowledge of such matters, and conscious of human frailty, I cannot certainly affirm that it is so. But of this I am certain: that to the Nurse who is animated by the true spirit and genius for her calling, all that I have been now saying, all formal laws of observance whatever, may well seem trivial and superfluous. Illumined by that spirit, set rules of behaviour—"touch not, taste not, handle not"—fade away like ancient ritual in the light of the Gospel. And while you trust to that guidance, free from the bondage of petty detail, you are secured from all chance of error, inasmuch as your daily task, the common routine of your life, is in literal conformity to the Divine commendation—"I was sick, and ye visited Me,"

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