

denial to work by turns with other Nurses, each taking up the work where the other left it off, and carrying it on as far as possible on the same lines; and yet this is absolutely necessary, for if each Sister thinks, in turn, her own way the best (upsets the arrangements of her predecessor, or reverses her directions), the orderlies, instead of learning their work, only get confused and put out, and take to disregarding all the directions given to them as only "Sisters' fads." Of course, there is always a Superintendent who shares in the work, and who can be referred to. She it is who is held responsible for the good nursing of the sick, for management of the wards, and for the discipline and good conduct of the household generally; and often, she has no easy time of it in spite of, or perhaps, *because* of, the smallness of her household, and the fact that they all, whether two, three, or four in number, have to live together without any of the outward and visible signs of routine and discipline which make authority easier among larger numbers. Unless each and every Nursing Sister makes up her mind to work for the general welfare, and to stand loyally by her colleagues, the little household cannot be a happy one.

Then there are other elements in the Military Hospitals to which English Nurses have to learn to accustom themselves. There are the apothecaries or subordinate medical officers—these are in charge of the whole Hospital at all times when the doctors themselves are not actually present. In general, the nursing sister and the apothecaries have worked together harmoniously; but it is a relationship in work which requires some mutual forbearance to avoid occasions of dispute. Next, it is a very different matter working with orderlies to working with Nurses and Probationers; orderlies have many very good points, and a brand new orderly is, perhaps, scarcely such a lost being in a ward as a brand new Pro., but, on the other hand, they are much slower at taking in a real intelligent grasp of their work. They change frequently, and sometimes it happens that the men supplied are neither efficient, nor even steady. Then last, but not least, is the trial of the native ward servants. It may be an advantage to be relieved of all actual scrubbing and cleaning with one's own hands, but rather, oh! far rather, would I often do it myself, than expend all my time, strength, and temper in searching for servants who disappear purposely when they are most wanted.

I fear that intending Nursing Sisters for India may feel somewhat depressed at the picture I have drawn, but I have purposely brought troubles and worries to the front. The other side of the picture is, that the work is in many ways exceedingly interesting, and every individual Nurse, who earnestly cares for her profession, may feel that she is one of a small band of pioneers in a new sphere, where skilled Nursing has hitherto been extraordinarily unknown; that she is watched with interest, both by the public at large and by the Government she is serving, and that the success and encouragement given to trained Nursing in India may be immensely forwarded by her individual efforts, which will actually help to bring a real improvement in the Nursing of the Military Hospitals generally, a step nearer realisation; while, in the meantime, many a young soldier exiled far from home and friends will owe his life directly to her skill and care. Surely these are objects worth striving for, and for which it is

well worth while to bear any discouragements and worries that may arise in the course of daily work.

In India, also, people are exceedingly kind and hospitable. It is easy to make new friends, both professionally and socially; the life may be a pleasant one, and it affords many enjoyments which are not within the reach of Hospital Nurses in England. But this brings forward another and very important question, which should be most seriously considered.

The Nursing Sisters are generally invited to most of the gaiety that goes on in their station, but it is impossible to lead such a life, and to nurse properly at the same time. Government itself has more than once sounded a note of warning on this point, and the very people even who issue the invitations will often be among those who are ready to jeer at the Nurses for thinking more of their pleasures than of their patients. I do not hold that a Nurse should be debarred, by reason of her profession, from all amusements appropriate to her friends, and to her own rank of life; but it is very certain that if the station gaieties are indulged in to more than a very limited and moderate extent, that the Nurses lose in consideration among all those whose opinion is worth winning, and they must actually weaken their own interest in their work.

Also, the independent position in which they are placed is in itself the very strongest reason which should induce them to exercise special self-restraint and caution, for a household of young unmarried women, living in a strange land, without relations or friends to answer for them, cannot safely indulge in many amusements which may be harmless enough for the married ladies in the place, or even for girls who are living in the protection of their own homes.

Nurses cannot realise this too soon, for from the day of their sailing from Portsmouth in one of Her Majesty's troopships they will be under the notice of the community among whom they will live and be employed; for the first time in their lives, perhaps, they will find themselves entirely free from control, and exposed to the close companionship of board-ship life; every one being equally and necessarily idle for the time being. I suppose there never was a long voyage yet which did not contain its own small history of squabbles, flirtations, and gossip, which is carried, on landing, to all parts of India; and many a thoughtless delinquent, ere now, has found that her "going's on" during the voyage have been freely and uncharitably discussed in her future station, before she has even had time to get up country herself.

The fact is, that life on board ship, and life in a military station, is such a totally new experience to many, that I feel bound to say in warning: "Don't let yourselves be carried away by the newness and the strangeness of your surroundings, but keep your profession always in view, remember at all times the nobleness of its aims, and the seriousness of the work you have undertaken to perform."

CATHERINE G. LOCH.

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