

fifty or sixty persons present there were a good many Private Nurses. Mrs. Gray condemned the motive of those who take up the profession, either because they think it fashionable, or because they may be tired of life and find it monotonous. Mrs. Gray then proceeded to give in broad outline some of the many qualities indispensable to the Private Nurse. She must have good health in order to bear the sudden and unexpected strains of work, such, indeed, as are unknown in any well-regulated Hospital, and also to bear long hours, and to lift heavy patients. The Nurse needs also sympathy and tact—the former to perceive a patient's wants, and the latter to enable her to do what is right without hurting the susceptibilities of either the sick person or of friends and relations. A strict sense of honour she should have, not only of the kind which forbids opening or reading private letters, but that which recognises a patient's secrets as sacred. If Nurses would only enlarge their interests, and acquaint themselves with what is going on in the world—in politics, in literature, in art—there would be the less tendency to gossip about the lives of patients. A private Nurse should realise and know her position. Let her remember that, first of all, she is the woman whose mission it is to help mankind; and, secondly, the Nurse whose mission it is to relieve suffering. There is one word which has caused much trouble and heart-burning, and that is "lady." In the Nurse should be absorbed the woman and the lady, for she should be superior to such distinctions.

Too little attention is given by the private Nurse to etiquette. Hospital Nurses are carefully trained to behave properly towards superior officers, especially to the doctors. They are taught absolute obedience and loyalty. Private Nurses are sometimes lax in this respect; and there have been those so foolish as to tell patients that their doctor is not giving them the right treatment.

As to training, that of the private Nurse should be even more thorough, if anything, than that of the one who intends to remain in Hospital work, for the former is more frequently left to her own resources. Variety of training is of great advantage in view of emergencies. If she could get some training in the paying wards of an Institution, so much the better, as it would train her to do things more daintily, and with greater regard to the opinions of the relations of patients.

The subject of cooking is, unfortunately, too much neglected in the curriculum of training. The private Nurse should be able and willing to prepare her patient's food, and make it variable and palatable.

The matter of dress and uniform is of great importance. Little or no change could be made for the better in the dress worn indoors; but the rigorous rules laid down at so many institutions in regard to outdoor uniform might, with great benefit, be made more elastic. Many patients objected to being labelled invalid by reason of their companion's uniform; and there were others suffering from, perhaps, mild mental diseases who were aggravated by the costume.

In the course of the discussion which followed, several interesting points were raised in reference to uniform, age, recreation, and fees, in which Mrs. Spencer, Miss de Pledge, and several Private Nurses took part. Miss Morris was of opinion that a Private Nurse was at her best between the ages of thirty and

forty. So much was being said about the desirability of having young Nurses. But it was surely unseemly that a girl of 25 should assume the responsibilities which devolve upon the Private Nurse. Of course, a Nurse should have rest and recreation; but everyone who had had practical work knew the impossibility of laying down hard and fast rules in this respect.

The next speaker gave her testimony as one who had had several years' experience of Private Nursing, and reiterated the impossibility of always getting proper rest even at night; for the Nurse is probably the only one in the house capable of efficiently treating the patient; and the woman who knowing that some self-denial and unselfishness on her part might mean the life of the patient, and yet failed to do her utmost, was unworthy of her profession. A Private Nurse needs to be not only refined, but also capable—qualities which do not always go hand in hand. Many of them also were not distinguished by broad-mindedness. Their efficiency would be undoubtedly increased if they would endeavour to widen their interests. The matter of fees was the occasion of some difficulty. She thought a Nurse should always claim two guineas a week. But the fee was undoubtedly felt to be very heavy by some families; and in such cases a Nurse might, she thought, give her services for less.

Mrs. Walker, for sixteen years engaged in Nursing, emphasized the advantage of knowing how to cook various invalid dishes; and the impossibility of being sure of regular fixed hours of work. As to uniform out of doors, she had been lax in this respect, for in her neighbourhood many mistresses had adopted the Nurse's uniform for their children's maids.

After one or two others had taken part in the discussion, Mrs. Gray dealt with the various subjects that had been raised. It was a pity, she said, that Nurses, through their unselfishness in regard to fees, should make themselves pensioners in their old age. And often the patient is far more able to stretch a point to obtain the luxury of a qualified Nurse, than the Nurse can afford to remit her fees. But there was another side to the question. The subject must be viewed in the light of women's work generally. It was dangerous to make Nursing less valued than it is and than it deserves to be. Of course, it was noble and unselfish to sacrifice oneself for others; but a Nurse does not live her life alone. She owed a duty to her fellow-Nurses as well.

The Chairman, Mr. Fardon, then made in conclusion a few trenchant remarks. He said that a Nurse, granting that she possessed a thorough knowledge of her subject, often failed through want of tact and ability to adapt herself to circumstances. She required a knowledge of the world and an equable temperament. He believed it impossible for a Nurse to go on working incessantly, day after day, without getting stale and deteriorating, much to the detriment of her patients. Therefore, she should seize every opportunity to change the current of her thoughts by out-door exercise, or novel reading, or study of some subject far removed from Nursing. A doctor could do much to help Nurses to get a fair proportion of recreation. He was entirely opposed to those speakers who urged the desirability of occasionally taking lower fees. Two or three guineas a week was not more than a Nurse deserved; and the public needed to be educated to realize this. Of course, there were

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