

Annotations.

"ABOUT THEIR TICKET."

We recently had the curiosity to inquire of a newsagent who has a large clientèle amongst nurses what sort of literature he found most popular with them. The reply we received, and which afforded us food for reflection was, "Oh, *Tit-Bits* and penny novelettes, that's about their ticket." Curiosity impelled us to purchase a copy of the weekly publication mentioned, and we find in its columns the question, "How is it that hospital nurses do not make good wives? I have known a good many who have married, and in nearly all cases their husbands had to separate from them." Well, the experience of the questioner has been unfortunate. But what was the estimate of his friends as to a good wife? Did they require an unpaid general servant? If so, we can imagine that the hospital nurse did not fulfil their requirements. There are, unfortunately, many men even now who have the oriental idea of matrimony, and imagine that their wives should have no ideas, and no interests, outside themselves, while they by no means regard the same attitude from themselves to their wives as incumbent upon them.

It must be remembered that hospital nurses are not the incapable nonentities who seem to some men the most desirable kind of wife. They have found their level in the world, they have proved their capacity, they have led an independent life as self-supporting and useful members of the community. They are, moreover, as a rule, devoted to their profession, and to give it up, even for the sake of the man they love, means a real sacrifice to them of much that they hold dear. Matrimony, being a dual compact, is essentially a life of "giving and taking." This the woman, as a rule, realizes, and expects to take her share in both. But, should she find that the "reciprocity is all on one side," the giving being her share of the compact, and the taking her husband's, unhappiness inevitably creeps in, and the relations become strained. Our experience of the marriages of nurses is that, as a rule, they have turned out very happily. More especially is this the case when they marry doctors, for their previous experience enables them to enter into their husbands' interests, and to give them a comprehending sympathy, which is a solid basis for matrimonial happiness.

HAMLET WITHOUT THE PRINCE OF DENMARK.

In the course of the year we attend many meetings of nursing societies, and the most noticeable fact about them all is that rarely—so rarely indeed that for all practical purposes we may say never—does the name of a trained nurse appear on the programme as a speaker. One sometimes wonders if the good ladies and gentlemen who organize these meetings, and who do valuable service as members of committees, regard the nursing profession as dumb! The lords and ladies, hospital chairmen, budding Members of Parliament, the many and sundry who foregather and discuss nursing questions, before more or less interested audiences, have their place at such meetings undoubtedly. For instance if they support Nursing Associations financially they have a right to speak as to their management. Again nursing concerns not nurses alone, but the general public to whom they minister, and it is right that the public should express their views from their own standpoint on nursing questions. Nevertheless, the only persons who can discuss the subject from the *inside*, and give an expert opinion, which is after all the valuable one, are trained nurses. One gets tired after a while of hearing platitudes and truisms produced for the delectation of the assembled company, and longs that those who really *know* should get up and speak of the work as it is. For instance, amongst all the nurses working in connection with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute surely one could be found to describe the every day working life of a district nurse. Yet, at meeting after meeting, half a dozen speakers get up one after another, and not one of them has ever had a day's experience of nursing. We do not think we are asking undue representation for our profession if we say that one of the six speakers might appropriately be a trained nurse, and, if it be objected that nurses are not necessarily public orators, we say unhesitatingly that professional conferences organized by nurses themselves prove beyond question that we have our share of able speakers as well as able workers. To organize the meeting of a nursing association without including one nurse as a speaker, is to ignore the professional aspect of our work, and the immediate result is the loss of much practical and valuable knowledge. It is, in short to attempt to perform the play of Hamlet with the part of the central figure excised.

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