

own living—they calmly weigh the nursing profession against other means of filling their lives or earning their bread. In that they act with as much propriety as their brothers who weigh Church, Law, and Medicine against one another, and finally decide for the profession for which they feel themselves most suited.

We get, therefore, in a hospital training school a mixed class of young women, mostly anxious and willing to learn, and very fairly representative of the manners and customs of English society of the present day, neither better nor worse. We neither get the *crème de la crème* nor the dregs, just a wholesome mixture of average modern female humanity. (I am leaving out of this discussion the submerged tenth of the nursing profession, the untrained or half-trained hack who toils on with little knowledge, no hope and no professional pride, posing as hospital nurses, whose extraordinary gaucheries are responsible for the contempt cast on our profession by a section of the press and the public.)

The young woman who comes to be trained in hospital brings with her then the customs and traditions of her own class, she comes a woman—not a child—already educated. Her manners—her mode of thought—are simply typical of the average young English woman of to-day, they are those she learnt at home. And what are the English manners of to-day—are they dignified, quiet, courteous, unselfish, and restrained? Are the English women of to-day especially domestic, considerate to servants, polite, no scandalmongers—not snobs?

I will leave you to answer those questions yourselves, but the home training, the home influence and the home surroundings will have moulded our probationer before we ever receive her for training into the hospital, we can only give her professional etiquette, professional manners, and graft those on to the formed character.

We may teach her the methods and art of nursing, we may give her a professional manner—but we shall never be able to give a really high tone to a clod, or a butterfly—to a woman who is neither high-minded nor unselfish, and who has never been taught to consider it necessary to be either the one or the other. "For manners are not idle, but the print of loyal nature, and of noble mind."

But one thing I think we might do—we might make it perfectly clear, and not be ashamed of it—that nursing, true nursing makes great claims on our higher nature, hardly any other calling demands such attention to eminently practical, sometimes loathsome details, to fulfil which properly and as a real nurse, it is imperative that we should take a detached view of them, to have that natural

higher elasticity of mind that keeps it sweet and pure.

For there will always be some professions from which people will expect a higher standard of life than the ordinary one, and on whose members people will be most hard if they fall. Take an ordinary man who bets and gambles and comes to grief, people say, "Poor devil" or "poor fool," but let the man be a clergyman, and they will say much harder things of him. It is only natural, the clergyman belongs to a calling that professes a higher standard of life, and that stands for an example of a higher spiritual life to others, so a doctor in a divorce case is always hardly judged, because he must be intimately trusted in his professional capacity. So with nurses—the nursing of the sick demands unselfishness, patience, kindness and untiring good nature, and people resent the absence of these qualities in a nurse, however skilful she may be technically. The average woman is very well satisfied with herself, she does not even know that she is selfish, jealous, pleasure-loving and bad-tempered, but she objects to these failings keenly in a nurse—they seem so out of place.

So ably and thoroughly has Miss Johnston's attack on hospital nurses—or rather private nurses—been answered, that it seems superfluous to allude to her article, a Nasmyth hammer has already been used to crack that nut. But she raises one point, or rather it raises itself out of her remarks, which I think is partially true, hospital nurses, as at present trained, do not always make good private nurses, and that is due to the fact, which must be clear to anyone working in hospital wards, that the training there is not intended, by any means, primarily to fit nurses for private work. Hospital nursing, hospital treatment generally, is an organised whole, not an individual and personal matter, and must be considered as a whole. The more perfect the discipline and organisation of the hospital, the less the nurse's individual resourcefulness is called into play; there is and there can be very little scope for individual initiative in a modern hospital. For, in spite of Miss Johnston's strictures, the aim and object of every good Matron and Sister is to promote the efficiency of the nursing, to minimise the effect of the breakdown of one individual, in the general working of the wards, to hasten the recovery of patients, to assist the work of the physicians and surgeons. But they certainly do not, as a rule, perpetually consider their probationers as possible future private nurses.

Hospital ward nursing deals with sick people in bulk, so to speak, and has for its first object the recovery of the patient, as it has principally to consider a class that has no time to be ill and is,

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