

Tact, common-sense, firmness, cheerfulness, confidence in oneself, which inspires self-confidence, and so health, in the patient, are the main, the indispensable, requisites in doctor and in nurse.

American Journal of Nursing.

Regarding the Private Nurse.

BY TRUDA GORDON.

How often have I heard the remark, "Well, if I were ill I would rather have a homely old woman out of the village to tend me than one of those trained nurses."

Why is it that such remarks are made and that there is such a dread of the private nurse?

Alas, the reason is only too easily found, for it is the thoughtless, unsympathetic, selfish nurse who brings odium on the noblest and grandest of women's professions and her innocent "Sisters-in-work" have to bear the burden of her foolish mistakes. Let me give a few instances, illustrating what I mean.

First, there is the class of nurse who, fearful of losing her prestige, falls foul of the servants almost as soon as she enters the house; irritates them by her "grand airs," rings imperiously for every trifle required in the sick room, issues her orders autocratically and objects to have her meals served in such and such a room. By the time her "case" is convalescent the domestics are in a ferment of rebellion, and the mistress is greeted on her reappearance downstairs with the intelligence that not only the cook, but Charles the footman and Perkins the parlourmaid would have given notice if "nurse" had stopped longer.

Then there is the indiscreet nurse, who regales her friends with amusing (?) details relating to the patient and the sickroom (details which should, like the Confessional be kept secret, forgotten as though they had never happened), and who delights in criticising the doctor's treatment.

I was told the other day of a well-trained nurse residing in a district where there was a dearth of private nurses, but the doctors, unless absolutely obliged, would not give her a case. Her criticisms of their methods and her gossiping tongue were *too* well known.

Another type is the callous nurse, who shows her patients plainly that she considers them merely as "cases" interesting or not according to the nature of the malady, and treats them in a purely mechanical manner.

I remember hearing of a childless couple being both seriously ill at the same time. A trained nurse was sent for, and she proved to

be one of the most thoughtless of her class. The husband died, while his poor wife, confined to her bed in the adjoining room, powerless to interfere, was distressed by the nurse's curt and irritable manners which she knew were harrassing the old man's last hours, for, deeply engrossed in a novel, nurse disliked being interrupted, and with a bright light conveniently placed for *her* reading, she let the old man die without attempting to soothe his death agonies.

Needless to say, his wife was in future prejudiced against private nurses.

Sympathy, too, in trifles is often overlooked by the private nurse.

A friend of mine suffering from rheumatism was confined to her bed for some weeks, unable to move hand or foot. She told me with amusement on her recovery, though at the time her feelings were quite the reverse, of a battle-royal she had with her nurse, a clever, capable woman, who insisted—and as her patient was helpless, of course, triumphed—on cutting her nails on a Friday despite my friend's superstitious objections to that day. These are only a few instances by which incalculable harm is done to the profession by some of its selfish, callous members.

While giving these instances I do not forget that there is another side to the picture. Invalids are often *most* exacting and querulous, their relations fidgetty and ready to object and interfere with the nurse's rules and methods, and too often nurse herself is little considered, her bedroom is comfortless, her meals badly cooked and served, and her needful hours of rest begrudged.

Neither do I wish to condemn the whole of "nursedom." I am far from so doing, for does it not number among its members many kindly, unselfish, sympathetic women who endear themselves not only to their patients, but to the entire household, who openly regret their departure and always speak with gratitude and admiration of the comfort and stay they proved to them in their time of suspense, sorrow, or bereavement.

Sympathy, unselfishness, forbearance, and tact are the qualities the private nurse should strive to cultivate if she wishes to succeed in her career, mentally as well as physically, and to remove the stigma which her careless sisters have brought on the vocation of "private nurse."

We last week reported that the Emperor of Japan had conferred a medal and blue ribbon on an English lady. The recipient of this honour is Miss Riddell—not Miss Lyddel as then announced.

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