

Reminiscences.

A HOST OF GHOSTS.

What a diversity of beings rise before our mental gaze as we think of the many types we have known in hospitals in all stages of their curriculum and taking their different paths through life.

Before making up your sentimental or heroic young minds that nursing is the field for your energies to be given full sway—pause and think—and think again deeply.

A woman to become a good nurse needs not to be dull or goody-goody—the brighter her personality and intellect the better for her patients' enjoyment and well-being; the more sympathetic and trustworthy she be, the warmer her welcome everywhere. If those only took up the work who loved it, there would be no fault-finding from the outside world; but whilst it is looked upon as a field for working off superfluous energy, passing one's time with a little more or less excitement or change, or even by way of making a living, it is a mistake!

An ideal nurse must be from infancy a person who puts herself aside, thinks for and gives up to others, doing little kindnesses whenever they come her way. She must be true and just, and then her training will give her the finishing touches—competence, experience, and patience.

From the point of view of getting a living by nursing, the best training that one can get is the goal to strive for. Many nurses prefer to remain as Sisters in hospitals with small salaries, on account of the constant change and widening experience they get, others make considerable incomes at private nursing, but have to put up with many annoyances. (I once worked on the opposite duty to a nurse at a typhoid case who wore rings and jangling bangles!)

The district nurse must be of the "ministering angel" type to be any good. Her life is one sweet sacrifice from morning to night and night to morning, and her pay is generally so poor that she must trust to God to have a crust in her old age.

Maternity nursing to those who have had general training, pays very well; but pity the poor sister, who, in a maternity hospital, has to teach the individual not knowing how to take or chart a temperature the whole course in three, or even six months.

I should like to be clever enough to draw pictures of some of the nurses whom I have come in contact with—

"The long, the short, the thick, the tall,
"If they're good, I love them all."

The aristocratic Pro., who on her first morning in the ward appeared in a silk petticoat, showing beneath her frock, high-heeled shoes, silk stockings, and hair dressed in the latest approved fashion. On being told that her first duty was to scrub some lockers, she found nursing was not her vocation, and did not again appear.

The tearful Pro., who spoke in sobs, was at all quiet times softly crying over home letters, and by the end of her first month started to be a regular gem.

The cheeky Pro., who always had a better way than her superiors of doing everything, and was fond of giving orders in the ward when the sister was not within hearing.

The grumbling Pro. to whom nothing was right.

The Staff Nurse, who left out every *h* and abused anybody of a superior class who came near her.

The Staff Nurse, who did everybody else's undone work and got no thanks for her pains.

The austere Sister, whom everybody feared and were grateful to all their nursing years.

The goody-goody Sister, who went much to Church but told wicked stories.

The pretty Sister who was never jealous.

The pretty Sister who *was* jealous.

The Matron who would *not* be greeted in the street.

The Matron who *would*.

The Private Nurse, sought and beloved by everybody.

The Private Nurse who got angry with her patients and generally made a muddle of everything.

The Private Nurse who talked scandal.

The Nurse who invariably talked "shop."

The Nurse who loved babies.

The Nurse who called them wicked names in the night, which their mother overheard.

The Nurse who slept on night duty and did worse than that, not to be found out.

The Nurse who fainted at every emergency.

The District Nurse who got £1 a week on which to save for her old age, and yet was happy, averaging eighteen visits a day all through the year.

The Army Nurse who always knew how to look best and be most charming.

A truly wonderful host of ghosts!

When and where shall we meet again?

ALEXIA.

Dr. Spencer of Middelburg, Transvaal, was married on May 10th, to Sister Mary Havilland, of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.

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