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EDITORIAL.

NURSING HANDICRAFT.

One of the marks of the good nurse is the daintiness with which her work is performed—performed with a pride of craft which no book knowledge can inspire. Thus, though the foundations of a nurse's knowledge must be well and truly laid in the scientific principles which underly her work, the superstructure must be built by herself, and each has an individuality which makes or mars her success, so that of two nurses who have passed through the same curriculum one may succeed and the other fail in her subsequent career.

Many qualities go to the making of a first-rate nurse, the clear head, the deft and clever hand, the sympathetic and understanding mind. Head and hand must work in close association, if the well-being of the patient is to be assured. Of what use is the most accurate head knowledge of right methods if they are clumsily carried out? From the new born baby upwards a patient realizes instinctively if his nurse has the true nursing touch. Gentle, firm, sympathetic it gives confidence, and imparts a sense of rest and peace. On the other hand, to be handled by a woman who does not possess it, be she never so mechanically skilful, is a continual annoyance to a sensitive patient.

To such an one the hand of his nurse conveys so much, without a word being spoken on either side. Some hands seem indeed to possess definite healing power, others soothe and comfort as they minister, all convey some knowledge of the personality of their possessor, and it is probable that few of us realize how much of ourselves we reveal to

those whom we nurse through the sense of touch.

Therefore those who are naturally clumsy had better consider seriously before taking up nursing as a profession, for many demands will be made upon their deftness. In the making of beds, the arrangement of diet trays the padding of splints, the preparation and application of dressings and bandages to injured, painful and wounded limbs, the nurse will continually need a light, sure, and sympathetic touch. While much can be done to educate hands, which have latent possibilities, in the course of training, there are others which can never be inspired with nursing qualities, and the experienced Matron in selecting probationers acquires the habit of making an expert study of hands as well as face, for she has learnt to regard them as an index of a candidate's suitability, or the reverse.

Think of the effect of a sensitive hand on the insane, the outcast, the criminal.

Again it is the hand of the trained nurse which has transformed our hospital wards from repulsive looking barracks, to havens of attractive restfulness to which the sick poor turn with confidence in time of need.

And, to mention only one more instance of the revolution caused by the hand of the trained nurse, consider its influence in our hospital mortuaries. Formerly friends of patients turned from them shocked and horrified, now they are transformed into resting places by the way, in which tired bodies may appropriately be laid, and mourners visiting their dead, are comforted and consoled by the care and love which surround them.

Truly nursing is a handicraft of which those who practise it have reason to be proud, and one which they would not willingly change for any other.

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