

and Mr. William Allingham, F.R.C.S., seconded, the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:—That this meeting, in receiving the report of the progress made by the Surgical Aid Society during the past twenty-five years, expresses its satisfaction that so much has been done to mitigate the sufferings of the afflicted poor, and impart new life and energy, who, but for the timely gift of suitable appliances, would have drifted into hopeless destitution." It was also agreed, on the motion of the Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser, seconded by the Rev. Dr. Green, "That this meeting heartily commends the work of the Surgical Aid Society to the compassionate regard and pecuniary support of all who have the will and power to do good, in order that its beneficent labours may be extended, and the power of the Committee to grant prompt relief to all deserving applicants may be augmented." The Secretary having read an encouraging list of subscriptions, a vote of thanks was, at the instance of Mr. John Easty, accorded to the Chairman, and the proceedings terminated.

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### CULTURE.

By MISS MOLLETT.

(Matron of the Chelsea Infirmary.)

"Das ist's ja was den Menschen zieret  
Und dazu ward ihm der Verstand  
Das er im inneren Herzen spüret  
Was er erschafft mit seiner Hand."—Schiller.

THERE are two different ways of nursing, as of performing all work: it is the difference between one who works as a skilled artist who loves his creations, and the one who works with about as much interest in it as a letter sorter has in the letters he parcels out. One nurse will be wrapt up in her work and centre her whole mind and heart upon it, performing all its details with intelligent interest, valuing all her knowledge and accomplishments chiefly in so far as they are capable of being used in some manner for its benefit; the nurse whose understanding is engaged in her work as well as her sympathy, and who takes a loving interest in it, much as the artist loves the creations of his brush and pen. The other nurse, who has no deeper interest in her duties than to get through the daily routine, who never cares to know the why and wherefore of what she is doing, will let all her pleasure lie outside her work and not within it, her relaxation hours will contain the true interest of her life, while what should be her "life's work" holds a very secondary place in her interests and affections. Just as a sculptor whose work appeared to him as a dreary piece of stone-hewing, a painter who regarded his canvas and oils as instruments of torture, or a sailor who hated the sea,

could hardly be supposed to find much happiness in their chosen career; so a nurse who has no intelligent comprehension of her work will find her life dreary and tame, for, if after having once embraced a career hopes and interest are allowed to run in another groove unconnected with it, the work is sure to fall immeasurably below the best of which the worker is capable—is sure to lack that highest finish that only love and absorption can supply.

But while her work should be her chief aim and interest in life, a trained sick nurse, to be able to enter fully into it, should have the breadth of understanding, freedom from prejudice, and refinement of manner that spring from a cultured mind—a mind that has had a liberal and not a narrow education, largely gained by contact with educated men and women, and a refined home training, for she is brought into connection with people of every class and train of thought, whom it is her duty to understand, to be able to sympathise with, and whose various peculiarities she must therefore be able to appreciate, if she is to be equally in touch with the lowest of her patients, and the most highly trained and scientifically educated medical man. A narrow-minded, uncultured woman does not take the trouble to be in sympathy with much that is passing in her patients' minds, has not the ready tact that will soothe down an irritated patient, a certain kindness and consideration of manner that is the outcome of good breeding; it is a constant source of irritation to a clever, quick man, to have to give his orders to a woman who does not understand him, and who cannot readily grasp his instructions, but who requires him to stop and explain minutely every detail of his orders; his work is twice as easily and quickly done if he is dealing with a sister who is able to follow him easily. The knowledge that is required in the best sick nursing, and the power of observation, are far more readily acquired by one whose mind is prepared by previous education and culture than by one whose mind is untrained; if the soil is ready to receive the seed it grows far better and takes far firmer root. And here perhaps I might mention that though I have met nurses who *presumed* too much, I have not yet met that *rara avis*, the nurse who *knew* too much.

Knowledge sown in a good soil, in a cultured mind ready to receive it, brings in its train wisdom—the wisdom that lingers and shows its owner how to use that knowledge with discretion, and that combination of firmness and courtesy that seems almost impossible to an uncultured woman. In a ward where the sister is a true gentlewoman in the *best* sense of the word, there is a general nice tone about the ward, nurses, patients, and even students are greatly influenced in their manner by it. If they know the sister is particular in the observation of those little refinements and niceties that seem so

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