

of their labour is about four times as much, points to a not unreasonable conclusion that there is something wrong somewhere. However, it is manifestly to their advantage in cases like these, for the employers and employed to stand by each other—probably both are the gainers—at the expense, however, of the public. The only really fair system seems to be the most recent one of co-operation. A definite number of trained Nurses combined together under a committee and responsible superintendent, receiving their own earnings and paying a small percentage to the Institution for benefits received in the way of introductions, board and lodging between cases, and other little advantages. Such a plan must commend itself to the common sense of all intelligent people. The services of only competent Nurses are retained, it not being to the advantage of the Institution to keep on their books any but good Nurses; that this system will become general as its principles are more widely known, there seems very little room for doubt. It is not the lot of all Nurses on completion of their training to secure posts as Matrons, Superintendents, or Sisters, and few, comparatively, have the administrative capacity requisite for such positions. But there are other doors of an almost equally remunerative character open to them, and of these, one of the most deserving of success appears to be the system just described. It is a vexed question at the present day as to the length of time necessary before a woman can look upon herself as a trained Nurse. Some schools consider one, and others consider two years quite long enough. In the opinion, however, of those whose knowledge and experience qualifies them to speak with authority in the matter, three years is laid down as the minimum. After a recent exhaustive enquiry into the administration of Metropolitan Hospitals and Infirmaries, by a Select Committee of the House of Lords, the unanimous conclusion arrived at, after hearing the evidence on both sides, was that no Nurse should be advertised as thoroughly trained under this latter period. When we think of the immense responsibility that rests with a Nurse, especially if she be in attendance on a case where a medical man lives too far off to be readily available in an emergency, surely three years is no very great length of time in which to become thoroughly equipped for her duties.

Now the curriculum through which a Nurse has to pass in that particular institution where she elects to train, is always a more or less arduous one. The hours, as a rule, are long, and the rest short. Also the surrounding conditions are trying to mind as well as body. The hours on duty vary from twelve to fourteen, which, in a big general Hospital may be described as an incessant rush. I do not believe anyone has any idea of her latent capacity for work until called forth under pressure

of this nature. The Nurse who takes advantage of all the opportunities which come in her way, ought to be one of the most capable and industrious of human beings, for she can, if she so wills it, live every minute of her life. Of course, the physically strong have enormous advantages over the less well favoured members of the community. To no profession is the law of the survival of the fittest more applicable than to nursing, for the numbers who break down in training is a fact familiar to every Matron. It may be urged by some that probably the test is too severe, but this would be hardly fair to assume, for just as often as not, the fault lies in the unfitness of the aspirant. It is usual, therefore, to engage candidates for a month on trial previous to their appointment, during which time they have ample opportunity for affording evidence of the possession of those qualities essential to success in their profession. In laying stress on the professional fitness of a Nurse for her duties, we must not overlook the important part which habits of punctuality, forethought and thrift, to say nothing of manners and appearance, should occupy among other qualifications. A Nurse should be trained systematically in these as in other parts of her calling. How often we hear complaints of extravagance and heedlessness on the one hand and of incivility and untidiness on the other. If the curriculum included training in these matters, as well it would be an immense boon to the community at large, as well as to the Nurses themselves. The natural tendency is so strong to be careless about things which cost nothing, to ignore the obligation owed to those by whom such things are provided. And then with regard to punctuality and tidiness, what a chaotic undisciplined condition of mind does not the absence of these attributes evince. How important to develop and cultivate them to the utmost! The elevating and refining influence of a courteous and agreeable manner it is almost impossible to over-rate—it is an immense power for good, not only in the Hospital ward, but also in the homes of the rich and affluent. It is the hallmark, so to speak, of the Nurse who is worthy of the vocation she has embraced. There is a moral aspect of Nursing as well as a professional one, which imposes a grave responsibility on the heads of training schools. A woman on completion of her training is either a good deal better, or a good deal worse, than when she commenced it. The process has been either a hardening or a purifying one. She has taken of the tree of knowledge for good or evil. How important, therefore, the inculcation of principles that shall eradicate what is undesirable. The life of a Nurse is so full of possibilities, of such perpetual interest, that, embraced from the highest motives, it can never fail to satisfy the desire which all healthy right-minded women feel for a career of usefulness and righteous independence.

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