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## Editorial.

### Modern Nursing.

LIKE OTHER OCCUPATIONS, NURSING is subject to the pressures and changes of the society within which it functions. Someone has said that it is not what you want in Life that is important but what is coming to you. This can very well be applied to Nursing if we pause to think of the many changes which have become an inevitable part of its progress: for is not the History of Nursing the outcome of the history and progress of Medical Science to which it is so closely allied? To give but one example this is most dramatically seen in the great changes brought about by the advances of Drug Therapy. With these advances the physical side of Nursing alone has undergone spectacular change. Gone are the prolonged efforts of sponging and bathing and other physical means, to reduce temperature: antibiotics and antipyretics now bring about the desired results in less time, with greater certainty and in complete absence of the effort required in the older methods.

Perhaps the most spectacular change the advances in Medical Science has made is the shortened period of acute illness. In Obstetrics mothers walk about twenty-four hours after delivery: the dread and dangers of Fevers and their complications have been removed by the use of prophylactic treatment and the administration of the antibiotics to prevent complications. Abdominal Surgery is now only a matter of days in bed in place of weeks. These are only a few examples of the radical changes brought about by advancing science.

If Nursing were not keeping abreast with these radical changes she could be accused of suffering from social and professional "Lag" and she could not claim to be adequately attending to the most vital part of her responsibilities—the welfare of the patient. The patient today cannot be regarded as something isolated for a period of days or weeks within the confines of a hospital's walls. Social changes as well as the changes of Medical Science have produced a MODERN PATIENT. "The Whole is greater than the sum of its parts," and a period of illness is but a part of the whole individual's total welfare-economic, social, physical and spiritual aspects included.

Modern Nursing meets the challenge of these changes by adjusting to their needs. In line with its ally, the Medical Profession, it assists (1) In speeding the recovery of the patient so shortening the period of acute illness; (2) It applies the principles of Health Education to ensure that the patient himself consciously participates in the rehabilitation process with necessary understanding. It is with this latter function of the nurse that

Nursing meets the greatest change and the greatest challenge, for it embodies a new psychology of the sick-room. In place of the tender loving care which did for the patient all he could not do for himself, his rehabilitation is now hastened by his being taught and assisted to make the effort for himself. This new teaching of the patient is largely in the hands of the modern nurse, and to carry out such a major function successfully she must be equipped with the necessary tools, and it is here that Modern Nursing Education is performing its greatest task. It knows that the sound principles laid down when professional nursing was established must be retained. At the same time the modern needs of both patient and nurse must be met if nursing is to retain its place among the respected professions. In the struggle to retain this position, Nursing, both at home and abroad, has made many mistakes, often in totally diverse directions. Methods have been mistaken for principles, theory has been unduly divorced from practice, judgments have been mistaken for facts: but in spite of its mistakes, which are but symptoms of "Divine Unrest" essential to progress, Modern Nursing still struggles and moves towards a better and greater accomplishment.

We have said that Nursing moves forward in line with the progress of Medical Science, but it must not be forgotten that it also moves forward as the direct result of the creative minds within itself. In these it has much to its credit, for many facets of Modern Health Education spring directly from the bravery and persistence of this creative group. Arnold Toynbee tells us that the progress of civilisation is carried on by the "Creative Minorities" functioning within each group of its societies. These creative groups tend to mould and remould their respective patterns in a never-ending attempt to remove mistakes and make changes to meet an ever-changing world. In so doing they make their own mistakes and changes which do not always mean progress. For these reasons the opposing forces of rank and file act as a necessary check and so preserve the needed balance which is the fulcrum to stability.

Nursing then needs to recognise itself as a societal group with: (1) Its own creative minority ever working for its change and progress; (2) A stabilising rank and file wary of change and new directions. It is especially important to recognise the equal significance and usefulness of both sections, for lack of recognition of this important factor is the major reason for "Schism in the Body Politic" found in every society.

Newer societies can adjust to progressive change with greater ease and more quickly than can older ones. They have not the harness of tradition to hold them back, and their people today are brought up with the

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