

Hospital, who are totally unfit for private work, and I am also quite convinced that there are many by nature quite unfitted for the work at all, and I do not believe that any amount of training would make them so. I do not believe the theory of every woman being born a Nurse any more than a cook, dressmaker, or musician, and I think that before anyone enters the profession of Nursing, it should be made a matter of grave consideration whether that is the best vocation for their disposition and temperament. Now, it is certain that, whether intended for Private or Hospital work, the would-be Nurse must pass through a course of training to gain the necessary knowledge required; and, unquestionably, the Nurse who intends taking up private work should be taught that a certain amount of technical knowledge is indispensable; but, in addition to this, if she wishes to become a help and comfort in a house of sickness, she must learn to practise unwearied patience and self-control, and cultivate the habit of studying the characters and dispositions of all with whom she comes in contact, and do her best to adapt herself cheerfully to the ever-varying circumstances of the life of a Private Nurse. To do this, I need hardly say, an unlimited amount of patience, tact, and discretion is required; and amiable temper is positively indispensable, and to any one not blessed with that I do not hesitate to say, Do not try to make a Nurse of yourself. I am now in my tenth year of private work, and, therefore, feel I may venture to make some remarks on the subject. During the time I was receiving my training in a London Hospital, I was much struck by the way in which everything absolutely necessary for the patients was done for them, but how utterly impossible it was for the Nurses to give any of the little extra attentions so soothing to, and appreciated by, the sick and suffering. There was so much to be done that it was simply a rush from morning till night. Now, this kind of training I do not think is calculated to bring out the softer, gentler aspects of our natures, but rather tends to roughen and harden. If a person finds that time will not allow them to do all they wish, they begin to consider what can be best left undone. Now, this is just what young Probationers do. They find they cannot pay as much attention as they would like to their patients, and get through the amount of work required of them; so they have to consider what is absolutely necessary, and the result is, that the necessary attentions are given, and that, I am sorry to say, often has to be done in a hasty, hurried manner, which not only adds to the discomfort of the patient, but certainly does not help to improve the manners of a Nurse when viewed by the eye of a sensitive private patient. It also has the effect of making the Nurse think, when she sees the patient recovering without them, that all those little attentions are quite unnecessary, and need not be attended to; but whether that be the case or not, a Private Nurse will find that they are not considered so by her patients, and, unless prepared to give them in a bright and cheerful spirit, she will be sure to give dissatisfaction, and fail to win the confidence and esteem of her patient. As for myself, I do not think them unnecessary, and I think that the wishes—"whims and fancies" if you like—of an invalid should be attended to so far as can be done without interfering with the proper treatment and welfare of the patient. If a Nurse is willing to do this she need not fear much difficulty in refusing to comply with any unreasonable demand if made. Now I venture to suggest that more ward maids be employed to do the sweeping and dusting, clean the lamps, brighten tins and many other things which I do not consider can be classed under the head of Nursing, and then the Probationer would have more time to spare to devote to her patients. Every woman of three or four-and-twenty ought to know how to clean a room at any rate; before she enters for her training, her knowledge of cleaning and the simple ordinary duties of life might be tested, and, if found ignorant on the subject, she should be advised to learn these first before beginning her Hospital life. I am well aware that the wards and all

belonging to them must be kept clean, and to do this a certain amount of cleaning must be done every day. But why not have proper people to do it and so give to those who wish to learn to nurse the sick every opportunity of doing so, so that they may become what every Matron would wish them to be—good, useful Nurses, a credit to their training school. I have seen Probationers begin their training in a very kind, thoughtful manner, and noticed that many little what I call home attentions were given by them to the patients, plainly showing how naturally they entered into their feelings and sympathized with them. But, alas! they soon found that they were in trouble on account of the daily work not being got through at the appointed time, and I know that in two cases it was for a time a source of regret that they felt it impossible to spend so much time at the bedside of the patients. In a short time, the feeling of regret wore off, and they began to show a feeling of utter indifference to anything beyond the necessary care, so changed had they become under the pressure of work and their surroundings. Those two women now are both, in one sense of the word, the most clever Nurses I know, but as private Nurses most lamentable failures. It fell to my lot to go to a house where one of them had been before. I cannot express how grieved I was to be obliged to hear from the family how very objectionable she had been. Her clever, skilful treatment was highly appreciated both by doctor and patient, but, putting it in the patient's own words, her hospital manner of speaking and working, and the utter indifference with which she treated every wish of her patient generally, calling them whims and fancies, made her a most unpleasant companion, and the time of her departure was looked forward to by every one with a feeling of relief. I have also heard a similar account of the other. Truly, a sad state of affairs. I honestly believe that those two young women would have become *beau idéal* Nurses if they had had the opportunity, in the first place, of following, to a certain extent, the course they felt at first to be right, aided by advice and counsel. I do not think that a special course of training is needed so much as an improvement on the old system. Let all the Nurses be trained and educated to fit them for private work; the Hospital Nurse in her ward will be equally as useful, and I quite believe that such a training would do much towards toning down the sharp, hasty manner of speaking, and give altogether a different tone to the general surroundings. Of course, I know that it would be impossible for a Nurse in a ward to give each patient the attention that a Nurse can give in private work; but still, I think that an Hospital Nurse might, with advantage, cultivate, to some extent, those virtues which every one admits are so indispensable in the private Nurse. If the Matrons and Sisters-in-charge of the Nurse Training Schools would endeavour to become more intimately acquainted with their Probationers, much good might be done, as a knowledge of the character and temperament of those under their care would enable them to better advise, counsel and control. Trusting that among the many improvements already made in the interest of the Nursing profession, this subject may ere long receive some attention, and that Nurses and Matrons may unite in bringing about such results that, in a short time, all the prejudices against us may be laid in the dust.—I am, yours truly,

E.M., M.R.B.N.A.

#### DISTRICT NURSES FOR THE WIVES AND FAMILIES OF SOLDIERS AND SAILORS.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—The scheme which I ventured to start just eighteen months ago for the establishment of properly qualified Nurses to attend and look after the Wives and Families of Soldiers and Sailors in large Garrison and Seaport towns has already far exceeded our highest expecta-

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