

As Others See Us.

ALL those interested in Nurses are naturally greatly interested in the branch of the work in which only the best qualified Nurses should be permitted to practise. We allude of course to private Nursing. We are aware that Nursing in private houses is not necessarily a popular branch of our profession, and also that complaints by the public against private Nurses are by no means rare.

Many circumstances of course combine to occasion both the Nurse's distaste for her surroundings, and the dissatisfaction of the public, the principal reason for both being the folly of expecting perfection in any condition of life, or from any human being. But there are also wrong and preventable circumstances. The half trained and therefore inefficient Nurse is still palmed off upon the public at full fees by unscrupulous persons, and these half trained women are naturally lacking in a conscientious sense of duty, or they would not be found willing to accept responsibility for which they are not educated.

What inestimable harm is being done in the estimation of the public concerning trained Nurses by these inefficient persons will be gathered by those who scan the side lights on private Nursing. In considering the following points perhaps some of us may find something to avoid.

A young physician in active practice, and most warmly interested in the true welfare of Nurses, complains of two points, first, the lack of control over private Nurses, and instances that when two Nurses are engaged to attend one of his patients, he never knows which he shall find on night duty, and which on day. In a hospital the special Nurse is usually to be found on duty from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., or from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. In his private cases, this rule, which is most acceptable to the patient, is not enforced; for instance, he visits his patient at 3 p.m. expecting to find the day Nurse; instead, he finds the night Nurse—the day Nurse has gone to a wedding, or a ballad concert, or, may be, to the boat race, and the night Nurse is on duty for a few hours. Again he calls at 10 p.m., expecting to give directions to the night Nurse, and he finds that the day Nurse is not off duty, as the night Nurse is at the theatre, or in bed, owing to the boat race. This hodge podge of duty times is naturally annoying to the physician and unsettling to the patient, and in our opinion a system of working destructive of all discipline, and which Nurses have no right to inaugurate. We are of opinion that excepting on very rare occasions, and certainly not without the consent of the patient and physician, two Nurses on private special duty should keep to the hours as regularly as they would in a hospital ward.

The Link Shell Truss Co., 171, Wardour Street, London, W., have a new truss. It is claimed that by this method of manufacture a truss is provided which will be more comfortable than the one in ordinary use and better able to adapt itself to the various movements of the body, especially if these are of a sudden character. The truss is fitted with a hip-joint regulator by means of which the pressure is increased or diminished as required and with a soft hollow shell pad perforated for ventilation. The Truss as thus completed is an efficient one.—*Lancet*, August 4th, 1894.

Again, this physician says one of the chief complaints of his patients concerning private Nurses is the great number of private friends they encourage to call at the house of their patients at irregular hours. This also appears to us to be contrary to professional etiquette, and certainly when on a visit to an acquaintance one would hesitate to invite other friends unknown to our hostess to call at her house without her express permission.

Again, in interviewing some of those that call at the office of the Registered Nurses' Society for Nurses we are surprised at some of the opinions expressed. One gentleman lately was most anxious to interview the Nurse before he engaged her, not that he mistrusted our choice, but because he was himself desirous to explain to her his household arrangements, "that they took an evening meal at 8 p.m., which was called supper, and he was anxious to know if a trained Nurse would object to going to a house where they did not have late dinner." This is very distinct proof of the annoyance many excellent people may suffer from the lack of good taste and refinement of those Nurses who exact privileges which they have no right to demand. We have also heard of Nurses demanding wine at meals daily, and then refusing to drink that provided as they "did not like the brand."

Also the little courtesies of life—we can never afford to overlook them. A Nurse was recently sent in the place of one who annoyed a patient greatly by systematically drawing the most easy chair in the room to the fireside, and sitting with her back to the patient. She monopolised the daily papers, which she always read before offering them to the patient, whisking her head round every now and again at intervals to ask, "Have yer milk?" "Have yer beef tea?" which having administered she promptly returned to the fireside and the consumption of "the news." This "chippy" style of Nurse is by no means rare, but we believe her career in private Nursing is always short.

Then there is the Nurse who looks upon the friends of a patient, as "an unmitigated nuisance," to be "snuffed out" with all promptitude; no Nurse, in the most literal sense, will fail to recognise the strength and also the virtue of family affection. What mother can be expected to hand over her beloved and suffering child to a stranger without reserve and without anxiety; and also the family "Nannie" must command our respect; to whom the little patient is passionately attached, and severance from whom has inevitably disastrous results; and then there is the "My dear old Dutch"; there are old Dutches in every grade of life, who were wed before the young Nurse was born; and innumerable other human beings whose life-long devotion to other human beings must be held sacred by any Nurse worthy of the name. As for fussy and irresponsible friends and connections of the patients, all must be treated with courtesy and consideration, and we opine that the majority will "yield to the treatment." Any way, what we Nurses need more than any other virtue is an inexhaustible supply of patience.

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