

and practice of professional etiquette amongst trained Nurses. Is it too much to hope that she will some day address us in further detail concerning the undoubted evil? A thoroughly commercial spirit predominates at present in Nursing matters, and is crushing out the noble *Nursing* spirit, without which it is hopeless to attempt to perfect our work, and which is at the root of the bitter complaint of Matrons and patients concerning the modern Nurse. No one will attempt to deny that the modern Nurse, in spite of educational advantages undreamt of in the past, is not a pleasant person. Why? Who is responsible for her most unsatisfactory evolution? I ask the question from a thoroughly unprofessional point of view, having ceased to take an active part in the profession, but being still warmly interested in its welfare. I have come in contact with some hundreds of Nurses, in and out of Hospital work, in my time, and I have no hesitation in saying that a very large majority of them were intensely selfish, slovenly, uncultivated women, imbued with an ungracious and grumbling spirit. I have watched with close interest the development of the R.B.N.A., and have not been surprised to observe that the bulk of the work has been done by a dozen devoted women, headed by our Royal President (out of 3,000), and that the echo of "What shall I get from my half-crown?" is the most pertinent question which presents itself to the average Nurse's mind. How much impetus has been given to the number of registrations during the last six months, by the formation of the Registered Nurses' Society, and by the fact that the fee would be doubled from the first of January, 1895? These questions are asked in no spirit of animus; rather in hope that when we, as a profession, realize our shortcomings, we may, in shame and sorrow, speedily set about encouraging a more unselfish and worthy spirit in our relations with one another, and with the public. Those of us who have had the advantage of working amongst the poor, might well learn a lesson from their goodness to one another. *True Nursing* is not, and never can be, a commercial commodity. Yet, as every labourer is worthy of his hire, the Trained Nurse should be paid a fair salary in the cause of the body politic.—Yours, "ESPRIT DE CORPS."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—After reading the letters regarding "The unprofessional among Nurses," I cannot see there is anything undignified or unprofessional in a woman who, as Miss Landale says, "is set apart by her special gifts for a responsible and earnest work, full of high aims, which she never can fulfil without a constant effort after greater perfection in her own character," and quite free from any feeling of sentiment or martyrdom, who is compelled to earn a livelihood, taking up Nursing as a profession. But such a woman, as one would depict from the outline drawn by "One who nurses for a living," actuated, solely and wholly, by the thoughts of a livelihood, and whose aim is, "to be ultimately stranded on a charitable Pension Fund or a retreat into an Alms-house," is not one likely to regard with feelings akin to shame anything that is unprofessional; nor is it to be wondered at that Nursing is viewed in the light it is, by many where so-called Nurses abound. Happy will be the day when Nursing is no longer fashionable, and women wishing to earn a living, turn their thoughts to other work where no higher motives need be involved.—Yours faithfully, "ANOTHER WHO NURSES FOR HER LIVING."

UNIFORM.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—From the times of the ancient woad-stained Britons to the present day, the use of uniform has been accepted as a fact. Union is strength. A part—perhaps no inconsiderable part—of this strength may be ascribed to uniformity of dress as well as action. The primitive intention

of uniform attire was to make a number of corresponding units form one even concrete mass. This was done for two reasons. First: To strike terror into the beholders—still the mainspring of what is called disciplinary control over brute force. Witness the effect of soldiers called out to overawe a mob. Often no actual contact is required to reduce the crowd to obedience. Secondly: To determine between friend and foe. This is the intention of special dress in any band of workers; and with that we have more immediately to do at present. There is, however, a third *raison d'être* for the use of uniform. An orderly and a homogeneous appearance has a distinct value of its own, in promoting the internal discipline and cohesion needful for concerted work.

At an exhibition of gymnastic skill by the lady pupils of the International College, Finchley Road, it was remarked, by one of the promoters, that the exercises produced a more exact obedience to orders. The concerted feats of these young girls, clad in their neat athlete's dress, awoke an admirable feeling of *esprit de corps*. In fact, though of itself a purely ritual observance, come down to us from absolutely savage times, the root of this old custom is deep down in the life of to-day. To sum up, it may be said that to strike a note of discipline, to differentiate, and to hold the eye—whether by a mass of blue, red, white, or green, is still, and always will be, necessary to any combined action.

In Nursing uniform, which, of course, is now the point in view, these three *desiderata* are of paramount necessity. Often the patients may be self-willed and unruly. To soothe the eye by evenness of quiet colouring, is of great importance. To show, at once, and clearly, to whom they may appeal for aid, is equally a benefit. For each and all these purposes the Nurse's uniform has been adopted. Does it altogether carry out its object? Is the colouring as soothing, the dress as neat and dignified, the helpers all as obviously of one mind and one heart as they should be? It may be doubted. In a recent number of one of your contemporaries, there is an instructive plate, showing three different and distinct uniforms in use in one Hospital in London. An especial feature of the advertisement is the latitude for taste allowed each individual Nurse. But is not this a case of uniform which is not uniformity? Which distracts more than it soothes? Looking further at the displayed sketches of Nurses' costumes, what various shapes and fashions meet the eye. Bonnets are multifarious, and trimmed galore. There is the "Saint Bride," and the "Saint Clare" Query. Why Saint? The caps, too, show a wide divergence of both shape and size, and are singularly nicknamed the "Sister Constance" and the "Sister Maud." Of cloaks there are as many different kinds, some one or two which could hardly be distinguished from fashionable wraps at present worn. The aprons follow the same rule. They run from those of normal shape and size, to narrow, frilled and crimped monstrosities, suggestive only of an "upper parlour maid of three."

But, to conclude. Is there, my Sisters, anything of dignity, of use, of orderliness, in a fuzzy fringe? And, when the Nurse is hot and hurried—if not flurried, which, of course, she should not, and yet conceivably may be—and the fringe is limp and loose, and out of curl? What then? Where is the restful sense of neatness, the comeliness of order, even with the plainest features quite discernible? There is no beauty like severity of outline, as Greek art has ever taught. No uniform so attractive as uniformity itself.—Yours truly, M. K. DOWDING.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Miss Sidney Brown, Warwick.—Many thanks for cutting. We have sent copy of Miss Mollett's Paper, and hope to attend and report the Paper mentioned.

Miss E. Hickman.—Your letter will appear in due course.

The Rev. J. B. Sturrock, Paisley.—We will insert your interesting communication at an early date.

Nurse Vergette and "Staff Nurse" are sincerely thanked for their kind and appreciative letters.

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