

The way in which the Board of a hospital is composed, is of much importance for the nurses, and in consequence also for the nursing of the patients. I think it a great mistake that the Academical Hospital at Leiden, and the Academical Hospital at Groningen, both, for the most part, institutions of the government, are without a medical superintendent, and without a Matron. The persons who are invested there with the highest authority, in position of managers or administrators, would undoubtedly prove to be excellent adjunct-managers—a change in position and in title, which nobody should dare to consider an underrating of their skill and merits. I should like to allude, in a few words, to the salary of the hospital nurses. Although the significance of any profession whatsoever may never be measured by the salary paid, I think a salary of 150 florins yearly (£12 10s.), offered by the Academical Hospital at Leiden to trained nurses, far too scanty. A salary of 200 florins yearly, amounting to a maximum of 300 florins (£25), is, in my opinion, a just pay for the services rendered by a certificated hospital nurse.

Next to the care for the present comes the care for the future of the nurses giving themselves to hospitals, lunatic asylums, and district nursing. Therefore, the nurses ought to be insured against the pecuniary consequences of sickness, personal accidents and old age, by the institutions in which they are working. A noble example of effectual sympathy in this matter is given by a merchant from Hamburg, Carl Heinrich Schmilinsky and his wife, who bequeathed, in 1892 or 1893, three million marks to the *Neue Allgemeine Krankenhaus Hamburg-Eppendorf*. The interest of this considerable legacy is used by the State of Hamburg as a most welcome subsidy to the training, the salarizing, and the pensioning, of the nurses. May many of our countrymen feel urged to follow this beautiful example!

Now, I shall try to answer the question: Is sick-nursing a dangerous profession from a sanitary point of view? The danger of being infected is very small when due precautions are taken; indeed, so small, that I think the danger of being infected with tuberculosis outside the hospital, greater than within its walls. The chance of being attacked by measles, scarlet fever, and diphtheria, is, in the infectious departments of our hospitals, not greater than in the intercourse with a household with children. In the hospital the nurse is perfectly aware of the fact that the patient is suffering from an infectious disease, and for that reason she can arm herself in time against the enemy threatening her. In the family-circle, however, it happens that one of the inmates is already infectious before the physician has been called or stated him to be so.

The present stage of medical science enables us to take the most efficient precautions against enteric fever, cholera, and small-pox. It seldom occurs that a nurse is infected by typhus when working in the favourable hygienic conditions, such as prevail in well organised hospitals. In the last five and a half years 77 patients, suffering from typhus, were nursed in the *Wilhelmina Hospital*, and this terrible and highly-infectious disease, by which often whole families are destroyed, has in all those years only attacked one of my nurses, who has happily recovered. Erysipelas and infected wounds are rarely found with nurses.

Experience has taught me, that hospital nursing has a stimulating influence on the bodily strength, the power of resistance and vital energy of the nurses.

The hospital may be called a training school in more than one respect. In the daily intercourse with her colleagues and her patients, the nurse finds an ample opportunity to increase her knowledge of men. The necessity of being kind to her patients, just and impartial, spurs her to pay full attention to her own words, and her own deeds, leading in this way to a clearer insight of the depths of her inner self, and a greater power of self-command.

The hospital does not only offer an excellent school for the further development of the character, but also a wide field of science, wholly new to her. Many practical manipulations for soothing and healing pain she learns there. She grows so much accustomed to the aseptic and antiseptic treatment of wounds, that the smallest failure in this respect, a mistake that may have the most fatal consequences for the patient concerned, does not remain unobserved by her quick and sharp eyes. She knows how to prevent it, in time. She learns, what precautions must be taken in order to prevent several diseases; the first principles of hygiene are revealed to her, including dietetics, the somatical significance of the different articles of food, and some knowledge of the vegetable and animal parasites, that are sometimes found in our food. Modesty and discretion are represented to her as two most desirable virtues which she must try to preserve or to obtain. A nurse must necessarily possess a certain amount of self-confidence, but at the same time she feels, that the medical treatment of the sick demands much more scientific knowledge than the nursing work. The truth, that she is only in the ranks of the laymen in the field of medical science, is deeply impressed upon her mind, but she knows too, that she may be, in this position of great use, by teaching to her fellow creatures, who are ignorant of these most common facts, the first principles and the application of the aseptic treatment of wounds, the urgent necessity of ventilation, the advisableness of sending in time for medical assistance, as there are many bodily and mental diseases, that cannot be cured, when they are too long neglected. By the possession of sound hygienic notions, and the spreading of them among the many persons, who are injuring themselves and their children by involuntary actions and involuntary neglect, the trained nurse is at all time an invaluable aid to the medical science, that tries to prevent diseases.

The nursing work in the hospital, where the desire to be of use is translated into the art of bringing comfort and relief; where self-confidence is cultivated; where the nurse is often purposely thrown upon her own responsibility; where the moral standard is kept high; where a large amount of knowledge and experience must always be applied with due modesty, this sphere of working includes the true emancipation of woman by calling forth all her noble qualities.

Let all women, who are waiting and longing for work, be roused by the word: there are still many active powers wanted in our hospitals, in our lunatic asylums, in district nursing. May this stimulating summoning make them say to themselves: I will help! Then the first step on the right way is taken. That "I will!" gives zeal and devotion, and leads them to conquer all obstacles and all difficulties."

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