

account until she was 28 or 30 years of age. In this connection it must be remembered that the limit of age for a private nurse was practically 35 to 40. When Hon. Secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, Mrs. Spencer said she had had many sad interviews with good private nurses, who could not get work on account of their age; one nurse of 35 who was bright, cheerful and young for her age, being sent back from a case, because the doctor wished for some one younger. Mrs. Spencer maintained that girls at the present time were much in advance of those in former years, and she strongly advocated their being admitted for training at a much earlier age than was at present the case. There was a strong argument in support of her plea ready to hand, in the brilliant career of a lady at present on the platform, who began her training at an early age—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. They could have no better example in favour of early training than in what Mrs. Fenwick had done for the nursing world. At the same time, though the public and medical men liked young nurses, she was quite aware that hospital authorities were far from being always pleased with them.

Mrs. Fenwick said that the working life of a trained nurse was very short, as stated by Mrs. Spencer. She had known doctors remark, "Don't send me a nurse with grey hair," so that it was not surprising that numbers of nurses simply refused to *have* grey hair; but if young nurses were in vogue with the public generally, there was one exception to this taste—wives were not in favour of young nurses, and this was not surprising.

Miss Wilkinson drew attention to the fact that if girls began their nursing education directly they left school, they had no time for any general reading, and she thought this was a distinct disadvantage.

Mrs. King Roberts (Cambridge) said that there was, rightly or wrongly, a strong feeling on the part of the general public that they did not want highly educated women as private nurses, and there was, therefore, a considerable demand for nurses who were not highly cultured. This being the case she thought it very advisable that the age for beginning to train should be earlier than at present, as women of the class which was in demand could not afford to wait for years after leaving school, before beginning to earn their own living.

Miss Stewart (London) said that if nurses began their training as early as 19, there would be, at any rate in the large hospitals with medical schools, complications with the students. Human nature would always be human nature, and it was only human that young people who were constantly thrown together should be mutually attracted. In her experience also, the women who were worth most, usually developed slowly. She therefore was rather against admitting girls in their teens as probationers. About 24 was she thought the best age.

Miss Poole in replying to those who had taken part in the discussion, said that there was "no fool like an old fool," and if a woman was inclined to flirt, the habit did not decrease with age. She thought that a great deal of the technical work which is required of nurses might well be begun early, nor did she think that the work required of them as nurses would be too hard for girls who could spend three or four hours a day playing tennis. No regulations were laid down as

to the age at which a girl should become a doctor, and in Dublin they frequently had young girls, direct from school, beginning their training as medical students, and living in lodgings by themselves, and she did not think that they were the worse for it. She quite sympathised with those speakers who desired training in mental nursing to be included in a nurse's curriculum, but she thought that the general training should begin earlier, and the mental work should come at the end of the training, as there was no doubt that it entailed the greatest strain upon the nurse of any part of her work. She would begin to train at 19 and end at 24. As an instance of the fact that character even more than age is a factor in determining the suitability of a nurse for a given case, Miss Poole gave an instance in which she was asked for a steady middle aged woman for a patient. She had not one whom she could send, but she sent a nurse upon whom she could thoroughly rely, whose age was 23. The doctor soon afterwards told her he was very much obliged to her for sending such a good steady woman, he had not wanted a young girl. He thought the nurse in question was forty years of age. She thought, therefore, that character rather than age should be taken into account in choosing probationers.

Sketches.

LORDS AND MASTERS:

Matron on morning rounds, looking over order boards.

Matron to Sister A.: "You must be very busy with Nos. 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 on poultices every two hours, and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8 on fomentations every hour, and so many inhalations and ice packs and medicines every hour, and spoon feeding, to say nothing of the helpless patients."

Sister A. to Matron: "Yes; Dr. C. is a great gentleman for treatment. Surely, he don't suppose that all these 'ere directions can be carried out in one day."

Matron: "But surely, Sister, you undertake to carry out the doctor's orders?"

Sister: "Why; of course I do. When we goes round I just says 'Yes, sir' and 'Yes, sir,' smiling most pleasant, and I does what I can; but I never forgets his own bit of soap, nor to 'elp him on with his great coat, nor to husher him h'out."

Matron to Sister B.: Repeats observations as above.

Sister B.: "Yes, Matron, I regret it is quite impossible to carry out Dr. C.'s numerous directions in the time—I have told him so."

Dr. C. to H. P.: "What an admirable manager is old Sister A. The more she has to do, the better she likes it, most admirable—admirable—and how different to new Sister B.—really a very disobliging and lazy person; it all comes of our permitting these nurses education."

H. P.: "Yes Sir, vast mistake, we must stop it."

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