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THE PROFESSIONAL NURSE AND HER TRAINING.

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APOLOGY is not needed for selecting as my subject "The Professional Nurse and Her Training." The time has passed when any question is raised by intelligent and experienced members of the profession as to the value of the trained nurse. Certain prejudices naturally exist against professional nurses; they are not specially harmful; they are rather to be respected, in a sense, than condemned. As physicians, we have had some difficulty in overcoming these prejudices; they were nursed into us through our childhood. Our experiences then, in our little or great afflictions, made deep and strong the impression that our good old mothers were the best nurses, that those of our own household, those with whom ties were closest, were for us better nurses than the stranger. This is all very human and very beautiful; but too much sentiment, which is often likely with the over-anxious mother and other members of the family, is harmful. There are only a few things more harmful: too much medicine, too much surgery, or surgery when it is too late, or surgery when it is not needed.

Our nurse-training schools have become important institutions, not only to the young women who with a creditable ambition enter them to fit themselves for the profession of nurse, but to the physician; for the physician, whether in general or special practice, knows the value of the trained nurse, understands the close and vital relation she holds to his patient, how much her care and quick intelligence of needs do to relieve his anxiety and promote the well-doing of his patients. These schools are not of ancient origin; they are a new growth, one of our period. They have not reached that high standard of thorough practical training which it is possible for them to do. That their growth has been and is slow is largely due to peculiar conditions under which their management is conducted. By necessity, they are very generally associated with general hospitals, the supervision and direction of the affairs which are in the hands of a Board of trustees or managers, selected not so much because of peculiar or eminent fitness as for family association, the much they have in a financial way, and the little they know of hospital management. These schools could be made very thorough and very valuable if they received due encouragement and hearty, strong, practical support from hospital authorities. They are schools, and need the most judicious management.

The training of these schools should be specially and singly directed to fit pupils for the duties of nurses. These duties in all their details, and all the steps in the training essential to discharge them faithfully and intelligently, should be definitely, orderly, and clearly outlined by teachers of thorough experience, those with a long bedside experience in association with the trained and successful physician. And not all thus trained have the fitness or ability to teach; they lack tact and those varied, peculiar qualities of mind and temperament that make the successful teacher. If they have no heart or soul in the work, regard it in a spiritless way as something merely routine and mechanical, they are unfit for the responsible duties of teachers. The teacher in this field is both born and made. She only is fit to teach who thoroughly knows her subject, whose knowledge of theories is supplemented by a wide clinical experience,—those bedside lessons so inestimable in their value to both physician and nurse. As these schools are at present conducted there is no uniform standard by which they are governed; in fact, but few of them, if any, have any standard at all. They have no curriculum, no more system than you would find in an old cross-road Kentucky district school. Out of the one may come the accident of the good physician or statesman; out of the other, rarely, the fully and well-equipped nurse.

A distinguished English statesman is credited with saying: "The man who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before is a greater benefactor of his race than the ablest statesman in the British Parliament." That school, whatever its character, is most far-reaching and practically beneficent in its influence which makes two ideas grow where one grew before.

Those desiring to become nurses should commence their work early, while young, studious, and ambitious, while their habits are not so fixed as to make a change difficult, if not impossible. When young they possess an enthusiasm which they are not likely to acquire later. When there is marked unfitness or lack of aptitude they should be discouraged from entering the profession. The same law of fitness applies in nursing as in other vocations. If too stupid to boil water or poach an egg, untidy in all that pertains to her person, belongs to the class that undress and kick their clothing under the bed, practise only a neck-and-hand wash toilet, do not know the value of an all-over soap and clean water bath, generally careless as to her personal appearance, with always something disarranged about her dress, slow and awkward, ungraceful in her movements, walks noisily, is always picking up the wrong thing or letting something fall, is dreamy and asleep when she should be wide awake and

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