

"Of course, everyone knows that nurses are busy people, leading a laborious life, and not having much time to attend meetings or read. As for the meetings, perhaps they might really get to them oftener if they were always interesting. The real reason meetings are often neglected is because they are dull. And who shall criticize? For, if you go and find your club or alumnæ meeting dull, is it not, perhaps, your own fault?"

"There is too much "shop" in many of these meetings; too much careful anxiety over minute constitutional points and what might be called domestic affairs. Not but that these latter are important, only, they need not take up all the time, and as for the constitution,—oh! that it might be abolished altogether, and just a few simple and easily altered rules of procedure take its place. The constitution is intellectually a snare and practically a clog. Valuable time, yes, precious time, is often given to discussing it and tinkering at it, which ought to be spent on something worth while. If, after the domestic affairs are settled, some broader line of study might be taken up in our graduates' association; some questions which makes us feel that we are related also to the world of the living and the active! Those organizations of nurses are the most vigorous and successful which take up for consideration subjects of general interest, and are thus brought into comradeship with busy, interesting people outside of their own work. As for the books—well, of course, if we mean to study Greek, we shall need books, but if, instead, we mean to study the question of our responsibilities to all people and our opportunities for helping to make the world a better, healthier, and happier place to live in, for others and also for ourselves, we do not need books. For this kind of study no one is more advantageously placed than we. Too busy to read books and study, we are busy right there in the world, where all the information we need to get is ready at first hand. Why study books when we can study life? We can make our own books. Between us all, what kinds of people, what kinds of life are there, that we do not learn to know? If I, for instance, only know the problems of the rich, you, in your different work, may understand everything about the life of the poor. If one has simply learned her responsibilities to the medical profession, another may be able to balance that on-sidedness by a knowledge of duties to other working women or to the cause of better education in general. We only need to exchange information, and, if, in our busy lives we come into contact with the people who are actually doing the things that

books are written about, redressing grievances, extending freedom, pursuing justice, is not this better than books?"

"Our associations might be our store-rooms and clearing-houses, where everything should be brought together for the general good. We would find there, to our surprise, that others of whom we never even knew are affected, indirectly, perhaps, but still affected by what we do; and that many of our actions, to us, perhaps, comparatively unimportant, are of great importance in their relation to other people.

"In studying our obligations to others we will incidentally learn what we owe to ourselves and each other. This, too, is something to which we have not given enough attention. Many plain working people have sounder and more intelligent ideas regarding their responsibilities to one another as fellow workers than have nurses, who have been heard to say that in their work they stood alone, that they owed nothing to others, and that they did not recognize the right of their fellow members in the association to be concerned in their professional actions, or to have anything to say to them in the way of advice or criticism; in a word, some among us hold the doctrine that what they do is of no concern to anyone but themselves. This sort of idea shows what page of the primer they have reached, and how much they have to learn. From working people who have gone further ahead we will learn that when one enters any branch of active duty, let it be called trade, calling, profession, what one will, one inherits, as it were, all the accumulated advantages which have accrued through the labours of all the former workers; one takes at once a recognized standing, and possesses certain privileges as the result of the striving of all who have gone before. It is, therefore, considered a clear case of shirking, only to be accounted for by ignorance and selfishness, when one declines to acknowledge any obligation in return, or refuses to recognize one's duty to those who will come after. Among the modern teachers and writers on this sort of question, one occasionally meets the phrase "class-conscious," expressing the special knowledge which members of a working fraternity acquire in the study of their duties to one another, and nurses need to cultivate something of this "class-consciousness"; that is, they need to become better acquainted with the construction and conditions of their profession as a whole, and to make more of a study of its history, its status, its weak points, its aspirations, and its possibilities for the future."

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