

brought into direct contact with the public, and the tendency was therefore to magnify their failings. There were a great many women in the world, and consequently their work was held in cheap estimation. From the cradle onwards they had to take a second place, and were not taught to respect themselves. If the income of the parents were not large, all available funds were used for the education of the boys of the family, and in the home the interests of the girls were subordinated to those of their brothers. A mother often instinctively sacrificed the child of her own sex. These facts influenced the girl in later life, for the injustice meted out to her entered into her soul.

It had been said that ethics could not be defined. Perhaps not, but the development of a high standard was very largely a matter of environment, education, and atmosphere. Even if the early education of probationers left much to be desired, it was not too late in the training school to teach better things. Nurses should be taught to be proud of their sex, and proud of their work—then there would not be so many colourless failures. She did not believe that the tone amongst nurses at present was as high as it might be. There was no smoke without fire, and there must be some reason for the general dissatisfaction felt. She believed that at the root of it was the fact that women, and nurses amongst their number, were not encouraged to think themselves as good as they really were.

Miss MARQUARDT (Camberwell) and Miss GREENLAW (Newport) endorsed these views.

Mrs. WALTER SPENCER (London) thought that far too much attention was paid to the criticism passed on the nursing profession. Those people had most to say who knew least about nurses. She had spoken to many medical men on the subject, and their dictum was that they rarely met with an unsatisfactory nurse. They met with many who did not get the credit they deserved.

Miss PELL SMITH (Leicester) thought that the public were to blame, because while they grumbled openly amongst their acquaintances about the nurses they employed, they did not report them to the institutions which sent them out, and so assist in the elimination of those who, for various reasons, were unsuitable.

Miss PURVIS (Middlesborough) agreed with this view, and thought it was unfair of patients not to furnish accurate reports.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK said that if nurses were to be judged by their professional appearance, she thought that most of those present would agree with her that many of the uniforms seen about the west end were a disgrace to the wearers, who went about shabby and unkempt, with cloaks unbrushed, and bonnets which looked as if they had been sat upon. The public judged much by appearances, and she felt sure they were prejudiced against nurses by the many sloppy and untidy women to be met in the streets wearing so-called out-door uniform.

Miss ISLA STEWART deprecated the wearing of out-door uniform. She considered that it carried with it the same obligations as a Sister's habit, and that behaviour which would pass unremarked in a private individual would cause criticism in one wearing a nurse's uniform. She did not see any advantage in outdoor uniform, at any rate in London. It was no protection to the wearer, while if any nurse acted in a way which discredited it, the authorities of the institu-

tion to which she belonged would be unlikely to hear of it, while they would be blamed for her conduct. She agreed with Mrs. Fenwick as to West End uniforms, though there were some which were suspiciously neat and pretty.

Miss GREENLAW (Newport) thought that often the expense of private clothes was a factor which influenced nurses to wear out-door uniform.

Mrs. WALTER SPENCER suggested that it might be well if the Superintendents of Training Schools gave lectures to probationers on Nursing Ethics.

Miss ISLA STEWART thought that most superintendents did so, though they might not always call them by that name.

Miss MOLLETT, replying to the various points raised in the course of the discussion, said that she did not think all the strictures passed upon nurses were deserved. A good many of them had their origin in sex jealousy. Not long ago she watched the disembarkation of passengers from a ship which had recently brought home sick and wounded, and a certain number of nurses from South Africa. On the landing-stage some of the nurses were bidding good bye to their patients. Their behaviour was entirely professional and circumspect, yet she heard a bystander remark, "Just look at those nurses!" and her companion added, "Ugly as they all are." She thought that some of the dissatisfaction with nurses arose from the laziness of the public which was over doctored and over nursed. Many of the cases for which nurses were now employed could be quite well cared for if the relatives would give up some of their own pleasures to render services which they were quite competent to perform, but this they declined to do, and it was just in relation to these cases that difficulties often arose. As to the reports furnished by private patients or their friends to institutions with regard to nurses she thought the public often shirked expressing their dissatisfaction because they feared the consequences of frankness. It was not unheard of for those who sent in truthful reports to be threatened with actions for libel by Superintendents of Nursing Institutions, so the public salved its conscience with the statement that it did not wish to be hard on a nurse, or did not want to spoil her career, whereas a want of moral courage was really at the root of its reticence.

Uniform Sacred.

Magistrates are careful, and rightly so, to protect the honour of the uniform worn by the "Soldiers of the King." We could wish that a similar care were always exercised in relation to that of the trained nurse. Recently a young woman, in addition to being drunk and disorderly, was charged at Marylebone with wearing military uniform. The prisoner said she "did it for a lark," and Mr. Plowden told her she had "no idea how sacred the uniform is." However, he should put it down to a drunken frolic, and fine her five shillings. When will a fine be imposed on every person who brings discredit upon nursing uniform?

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