

The alert watchfulness, the strained attention, the quick-handedness necessary for assisting the surgeon in a critical operation, stimulated as a nurse is at such times by the inspiring contact of fellow-workers, the keen observation and criticism of bystanders, cannot fail to bring out the best that is in her; but how about the patience, gentleness, and endurance that are needed after the surgeons have gone, and the excitement has subsided?

Is that lonely watcher through those long, dark night hours quite as much at her best and highest level?

The patient who, up to the time of her operation, was upborne by the consciousness of an approaching crisis in her life, unsurpassed by anything in her previous experience for importance and mystery, is now waking slowly to pain and discomfort. She is anguished by a raging thirst that you cannot even imagine, and may not quench.

Her whole being is discordant from the ruthless discipline of the steel that has wrought her salvation by its relentless work, and has left the quivering tissues riven asunder and torn beneath its touch.

She is entering into life again, indeed, but maimed; a prey to deadly nausea, querulous, exacting, complaining, the poor weak, human heart and flesh fainting and falling together, the buoyancy of expectancy having given place to the pangs of reality.

Yours it is now, by the calmness of your healing presence, the magnetism of your cool touch, the quieting influence of your trained self-collectedness and kind patience, to soothe the jarring nerves, still the restless limbs, and woo the blessing of sleep to the tumultuously throbbing brain.

Doctors cannot help you here. Great and good as their work is, yet perhaps but once or twice in their career do they know what a real night watch means. It is intrinsically a nurse's duty—a nurse's privilege.

By her patient's side, in the quiet stretch of hours that lie between evening and morning, are cultivated some of the truest nurse's qualities—qualities to which only silence and the unseen can give birth. Here, too, lurk the severest tests of character, the greatest need for self-control. Self-control, from the time you go on duty with an exacting patient, who will not cease from troubling till she falls asleep at last after hours of wakefulness, from sheer exhaustion, until your weary frame, crying out in every fibre for the sleep that should be profoundest in the dead of night, yet still strives to retain its wakefulness, and at last you gaze thankfully at the solemn dawn, while you watch the "day break, and the shadows flee away."

What great, what serious work is here! How better, than when stricken by accident or disease, can we realise the universal brotherhood of mankind?

Whether at home or abroad, in our biggest

or smallest hospitals, in the mansions of the wealthy, the slums of the poor, or any of the countless homes scattered up and down all over the world, a nurse's real work varies little, because human nature is always the same.

Loving-kindness and skill are everywhere needed. The mysterious processes of life and death are alike in high or low, rich or poor.

Each one of the many lines on which nurses work converge to one point—the healing and comforting of the sick.

Whether as Matrons of hospitals, Sisters of wards, or the rank and file of nurses everywhere—in district or private work—as teachers or lecturers—from the fresh-faced probationer eager to begin, to the time-worn veteran in our ranks, whose kindly wrinkles shelter beneath a crown of silvering hair, on which rests the cap of her choice even now, though no longer worn as a badge of active service—all, all are enrolled in the same crusade against suffering.

And, while we are grateful to the past for its many lessons, to the present for its ameliorations, its improvements, its opportunities, let us not be content to rest on our oars, and think we have learned all we need; but, year by year, reach out a glad hand of trust to the future with its infinite possibilities.

Let us welcome every new development, each fresh sidelight thrown by science on the treatment of disease, and, possessing our souls in patience, arm ourselves anew with truth and equity, and seek, each and all, in the year that lies before us, to render the worker more worthy of her work.

A Generous Gift.

The Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan, has, owing to the generosity of Dr. Prosser White, been brought abreast with medical science by the addition of the Finsen light and the Röntgen rays, so that in future the terrible disease of lupus and other skin troubles can, if necessary, be treated by the Finsen method in the institution. A special room has been fitted up with the Röntgen ray apparatus, and the opening ceremony was performed last week by Mrs. Ffarrington, wife of the Chairman of the Board of Management, before a large and representative gathering, including the members of the medical board, and the medical men of the town and district. Dr. Berry, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mrs. Ffarrington, said that they were exceedingly indebted to Dr. White for his kind gift, which would enable the Wigan Infirmary to treat cases which formerly had to be sent to Liverpool and Manchester.

At the close of the ceremony Mrs. Ffarrington submitted her hand for photogravure under the Röntgen rays, and the Finsen lamp and the X-ray apparatus came in for general inspection.

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