

as a leaven, making a desirable change in the manners and ideals of the great majority of the nurses who, whether we like it or not, will inevitably come from a lower social stratum. Is the ordinary district nurse to give everything she has, and gain only a bare material return? We are so exceedingly anxious to improve the poor; why not equally anxious to increase the number of women with the appearance, accent and manners of gentlewomen? It might be necessary to shield the well-educated probationers from almost constant contact with their inferiors if they were young, but members of the upper classes are, as a rule, older than the other probationers when they begin the work, and their character, habits, and tone of mind ought to be firmly fixed.

The great deficiencies in many otherwise suitable nurses are their want of sympathetic knowledge of the poor, and the lack of tact and urbanity in their manners. Their daily work in the district, accompanied at first by an interpreter, will do something to rectify the first, provided that it results from simple ignorance; and precept and example may do much, even during their brief training, to rouse in them the conception that substantial kindness to patients and patients' friends is not enough, but that courtesy and consideration are needed at every step. To give an example of the kind of mistakes that are made and the offence that is unwittingly given: A very intelligent little girl, ninth out of twelve healthy and well-brought-up children, said to me: "Do you know what Miss — told me? She said I ought to ha' bin scrubbin' the house *long* ago. I told her as mother wouldn't let me do it, not yet, 'cos I'd get myself all wet, but I *do* look to see how 'Lizabeth does it when she cleans the house." This child was small for her age, and her age was barely nine!

That remark had been rankling in her mind for more than a month, and had doubtless been repeated to her mother. I strained a point in Miss Blank's favour, and said: "She must have been teasing you. Everyone knows that such a mite of a child cannot scrub; but you can do lots of other things to help your mother, can you not?" She gave me a list of her performances, and I think it did something towards soothing her feelings.

It is strange that while the upper classes are often extremely bitter against the poor for their supposed ill-treatment of their children, all the personal advice they give takes the form of: "Why do you spend so much on their clothes? Why don't you make them eat what you give them? You ought to give them a good whipping for being so troublesome. Why do you let them play about the streets? The girls ought to sit down and sew, and it is high time that Tom left school and went to work." There is scarcely ever any plea for greater indulgence, or any sympathy with the mother in her desire to see them well dressed and

happy. The probationer must be taught that the mother with twenty shillings a week and half-a-dozen children has precisely the same maternal feelings as the mother with two, four, or six hundred a year, while she has frequently been called on to make, and generally has made, infinitely greater sacrifices on their behalf. It is impossible to show too much respect for a poor woman who has reared her children, managed to feed and clothe them well, inspired them with the elements of morality and self-respect, and taught them to love one another and spare a thought for their neighbour. To see such a woman—and we count them by hundreds among our patients—treated with brusque discourtesy by a nurse who would be almost servile to any fashionably-dressed person is an intolerable sight, and argues present, if not lasting, unfitness for the work.

Again, do not the upper classes complain how soon the children of the poor shake off parental control? But what do these critics do to help maintain it? For example, is not almost every mistress, young or old, married or single, rich or poor, in the habit of speaking to her servants as if she considered herself better fitted to give advice to them on all imaginable points than their own mothers? The probationer must be warned never to do or say anything to lower the mother's prestige in the children's eyes; if obliged to act against her wishes, she must do it tactfully and gently, and under a veil of long words. I speak only of the mother, because, in my experience, father, if kind and respectable, is generally regarded as mother's eldest and most docile child. When a little girl tells me, "Mother gave father a kettle to take to the works, so as he could boil hisself cocoa, afternoons," I know that that kettle was paid for out of father's regular wages; but when she tells me "Father gave mother a pair of buttoned boots on her birthday," it means that father saved the money up out of the trifle returned to him for pocket money, or earned in overtime work. There are so many persons who seem unable to see the British workman except when he is being ejected from a public-house, or loafing at a street corner, or making an involuntary appearance at the police-court, and in domestic life they are convinced that he is a brutal tyrant. They are totally unaware of the state of tutelage in which he really lives. Talk of the subjection of women! I doubt if the bare idea of fathers being equal to mothers in rank and authority ever enters the mind of any cottage child under sixteen. From their conversation, all my little friends might be fatherless, except for an occasional dramatic recital of how Dad "went and did" something that mother said he "hadn't ought to," and the disastrous results of this untimely rebellion. It is impossible to raise father's position, and as he is perfectly satisfied with it, not minding in the least when his youngest-born cries, warningly, "Mother

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